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New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: This morning the Committee, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, will continue with its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. The first speaker on my list this morning is the distinguished representative of Kazakhstan.

I call on the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me extend my congratulations to you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of the First Committee and express our confidence that under your able stewardship substantive progress will be made in addressing important issues on the agenda of this Committee.

Kazakhstan has consistently called for an enhanced regime to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. That position is rooted in the sufferings of our people, who are still reeling from the negative effects of the nuclear explosions that occurred at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, which was shut down exactly 15 years ago by decree of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. That position was further supported by my country's historic decision to voluntarily renounce its nuclear arsenal, which was once the fourth-largest in the world.

We hope that that step serves as a positive example in the light of the ongoing major crisis that has struck the global security system. Regrettably, the total lack of results at the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in the Disarmament Commission remains a major challenge for the international community. We must stop merely debating whether nuclear disarmament or nuclear non-proliferation is more important. It is time to take coordinated efforts to overcome this crisis. Real progress is possible if all Member States fulfil their obligations with regard to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of vertical and horizontal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We have already made a good start. The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, signed on 8 September 2006 in Semipalatinsk, is a demonstration of political will on the part of five Central Asian States — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The signing of that landmark instrument could serve as catalyst for the process of enhancing the NPT. The Central Asian States are ready to continue consultations with the permanent members of the Security Council on the issue of the Treaty's entry into force.

I should like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to all the Member States, international bodies and non-

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governmental organizations that have warmly congratulated us on our decision to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. As they noted, that event represents a new and positive step towards the objective of the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is all the more surprising, then, that the signing of the Treaty — which is one of the most important developments in recent years in the area of non-proliferation — was not even mentioned in the opening statement made to the Committee by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

We urge the Governments of those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to display political will and genuine commitment regarding nuclear disarmament. States should reaffirm their commitment to a moratorium on nuclear-test explosions and work to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT.

Kazakhstan shares the view that it is necessary to comply strictly with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on weapons of mass destruction. We must intensify our efforts to enhance national export-control mechanisms, particularly with regard to dual-use materials and technologies, as well as missiles and other means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction and man-portable defence systems.

Having joined the club of global space Powers, Kazakhstan reaffirms its commitment to preventing the placement of nuclear weapons in outer space and welcomes the adoption of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

It is a matter of great concern that the crisis in the sphere of disarmament has extended not only to strategic weapons, but also to conventional weapons. Regrettably, Member States have so far failed to devise common approaches to the Programme of Action on Small Arms. The international community should work tirelessly to combat illegal trafficking in conventional arms. Kazakhstan calls on States to renew their commitment to strictly implement the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

It is necessary to continue negotiations within the United Nations in order to draft legally binding international instruments to combat the illicit trafficking in conventional weapons and ammunition and to ensure effective monitoring of and compliance with United Nations arms embargoes.

Achieving global security and disarmament would hardly be possible without appropriate measures to strengthen regional security. In June, the Asian countries members of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) held the second CICA summit at Almaty. Leaders of the 18 Asian States attending discussed recent regional and global developments and adopted the summit's Declaration. They also signed an agreement on the CICA secretariat, which will be important for the future activities of the Conference. The CICA process undoubtedly strengthens stability and confidence-building measures in Asia, in the interests of the prosperity and sustainable development of our countries.

The possibility that weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of terrorists is a matter of grave concern. In that context, Kazakhstan supports further universalization and enhancement of counter-terrorism treaty mechanisms. We look forward to the early completion of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism.

Kazakhstan commends the launching of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and believes that international cooperation to fight terrorism should be developed in full conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and norms of international law.

Finally, I would like once again to assure you, Madam Chairperson, that we will fully support all efforts by the Committee to adopt decisions that will strengthen the non-proliferation regime and will promote security at the regional and global levels. My delegation stands ready to work together to achieve our common goals.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Cuba fully supports the statement made in this debate by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). That statement reflects the principled positions and priorities in the area of disarmament and security adopted by the

Movement's heads of State or Government at the Summit held successfully in Havana from 11 to 16 September this year. At the Havana Summit, the leaders of the 118 NAM member States agreed to promote those positions and priorities in the relevant international forums. Cuba will work actively in the First Committee, together with the rest of the NAM countries, to carry out that mandate.

The constant increase in military expenditures is worrisome, mainly in the light of the dizzying growth of the super-Power's military budget and its increasingly obvious hegemonism, unilateralism and direct or covert interventionism, along with the resulting insecurity felt by the weakest countries and the attempt to justify the doctrine of the pre-emptive use of force.

One country, the United States, spends as much on weapons as the rest of the world put together, and United States companies produce 60 per cent of all weapons sold on the planet. How much progress could be made if only a minute portion of the more than $1 trillion currently devoted to military expenditures were used to find solutions to the problems associated with underdevelopment and to reduce the gap between the richest and the poorest countries? With the resources currently devoted to armaments, the 852 million people suffering from hunger throughout the world could be fed for a year or 38 million of those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic could be provided with medication for 40 years. The Millennium Development Goals could be achieved with only 10 per cent of the current military expenditures.

Cuba reiterates its proposal to devote at least half of current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development through a fund managed by the United Nations.

Despite the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are currently around 33,000 nuclear weapons in the world, more than 13,000 of them ready for immediate use. Nuclear weapon modernization programmes have not stopped.

The only safe and effective way to avoid the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is their total elimination. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and doctrines that prescribe their possession and use puts international peace and security at risk. For this reason, Cuba ratifies the historic position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that nuclear disarmament is, and should continue to be, the highest priority in the area of disarmament.

Nuclear-weapon States are legally bound not only to pursue in good faith, but also to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control. Cuba rejects the selective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Issues pertaining to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue to be disregarded while priority is given to horizontal non-proliferation. We strongly support the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, with strict observance of commitments under the NPT.

Turning to conventional weapons, we consider that this Committee should review in depth and adopt real steps to prevent certain countries from continuing to develop and use increasingly more sophisticated and deadly weapons, which cause "collateral damage", a phrase behind which some countries try to hide their innocent victims.

The situation of the multilateral disarmament and arms control machinery is increasingly worrisome — the Disarmament Conference remains at a standstill. Every year, the First Committee adopts draft resolutions that are seldom honoured or implemented, particularly those pertaining to nuclear disarmament. The 2005 World Summit could not even express a position on the question of disarmament. The 2005 NPT Review Conference was a failure. The 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects could not agree upon a final document. In view of such realities, Cuba considers it urgent to hold a fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this regard, we support the reactivation as soon as possible of the Open-ended Working Group to prepare that fourth special session.

To attribute the lack of concrete results on disarmament to a lack of effectiveness in the working methods of the bodies that deal with disarmament issues, including the First Committee, would be a simplistic and distorted vision of reality. The main difficulties that the disarmament machinery faces do not lie in the higher or lower effectiveness of its working methods, but rather in political reasons,

particularly the lack of political will by certain powerful States, especially the military super Power, to advance in the issue that is of key relevance for international peace and security: the question of nuclear disarmament.

Cuba supports the greatest possible improvement of the working methods of all organs of the United Nations, including the First Committee, as long as this is not carried out at the expense of the right of all Member States to promote and uphold their legitimate interests, and as long as the key role of the General Assembly within the Organization is not affected, but is rather strengthened.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming that the Cuban delegation will make its best efforts to attain relevant practical results at this session of the First Committee.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I would like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The First Committee is meeting against a complex international backdrop marred by feelings of mistrust and uncertainty. Some countries, on the basis of their military or economic power, believe that the rules of disarmament and the achievement of international security do not apply to them or to their allies, while the overwhelming majority believe that these rules apply to all without exception: nuclear and non-nuclear States, and large producers and small consumers of conventional weapons, irrespective of their level of military or economic progress.

This climate explains the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), followed by the failure of the 2005 World Summit to agree on a disarmament section for its Outcome Document, the inability of the Disarmament Commission in 2006 to agree on the referral of a number of working documents to the 2007 session, the failure of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the failure by the Conference on Disarmament even to agree on a substantive report at its 2006 session.

This ongoing discord affects the entire multilateral disarmament machinery. It reflects a clear pattern of substantive imbalance that in turn raises questions about the causes behind that clear pattern impeding the work of the international disarmament machinery. It also raises questions about the deliberate intention of some parties to frustrate the multilateral disarmament machinery. Is it their objective to evade their clear obligations in the framework of the existing nuclear disarmament machinery and attempt to replace this with other machinery outside the United Nations serving the particular security objectives of some parties? In the same category are the non-proliferation initiatives and codes of conduct that some are trying to impose through the Security Council but outside the framework of international conventions.

We are currently witnessing the gravest sign of the collapse of the non-proliferation regime established by the NPT. That regime was based on the commitment by the nuclear-weapons States to achieve nuclear disarmament within a specified time frame, under effective international control, in return for the commitment by non-nuclear States to make full use of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without proceeding to the production of nuclear weapons. In our view, the peaceful use of nuclear power is the inalienable right of all parties to the NPT.

The NPT thus faces a real threat as a result of some of the intransigent positions that are being taken. Those positions must be modified. First, the evasion by the nuclear-weapons States of their commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the Treaty and their failure to take the 13 verifiable steps for nuclear disarmament in a multilateral, international framework, including the activation of the disarmament machinery of the Conference on Disarmament, the conclusion of an international convention on fissile materials in a verifiable international framework that deals with existing stockpiles and prohibits future production, and the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its entry into force. All those steps were agreed to by consensus by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Second, the desired balance has not been struck between disarmament and non-proliferation.

There is a lack of commitment to the clear priorities that have governed the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. There is an attempt to replace those priorities bilaterally and outside the multilateral framework.

Thirdly, the nuclear Powers have not honoured their commitment to support and assist other States parties to the Treaty in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. They have portrayed some attempts to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as a first step in the production of nuclear weapons; that is based on arbitrary assumptions and is not supported by any concrete evidence.

Fourthly, there has been a failure to exert real efforts to achieve the universality of the Treaty. This universality is the only guarantee of its continued existence and of the stability of the Treaty regime. Here, the foremost failure is the lack of implementation by the depositary States of their commitment to the special resolution on the Middle East adopted as an integral part of the 1995 decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty and the relevant paragraphs of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

At the same time, some nuclear Powers continue to support States that are not parties to the Treaty and that have acquired or are exchanging information about acquiring nuclear weapons, in clear contravention of their commitment to work to cause those States to adhere to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Fifthly, there are double standards in dealing with States' obligations in the area of disarmament, nuclear disarmament in particular, on the basis of political, ideological and sometimes religious considerations. This weakens the legal framework of the obligations of States parties to the NPT.

Based on the aforementioned, Egypt reiterates its rejection of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Israel, by Iran or by any other State in the Middle East. We repeat the need for a single standard in dealing with questions of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the Middle East in such a way as to lead to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in accordance with an effective plan based on Israel's guaranteed adherence to the NPT as a non-nuclear State and the destruction of all its non-peaceful nuclear capabilities. At the same time, such a zone should be based on the guarantee that no State in the region — including Iran, of course — will seek to acquire nuclear weapons. That is the only way to deal with this question within a clear framework that would ensure international security and be based on legality, justice and equality.

The failure last year of collective efforts in the field of disarmament was not confined to nuclear disarmament. It also applied to conventional weapons. The Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons failed as a result of the conflict between the positions of the large producers and those of the small States that suffer greatly from the tragic humanitarian consequences of that illicit trade. Some are now attempting to conclude a treaty to govern the conventional weapons trade, even though the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has failed to receive voluntary data from Member States. Egypt believes that international efforts must concentrate on underscoring the responsibility of States for the full implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons at the national level, and the international community's responsibility to provide technical and financial support to States, particularly the developing countries, in implementing the objectives of the Programme of Action, instead of dispersing the international community's efforts in parallel frameworks covering all other conventional weapons. That could erode the current consensus in this regard.

Egypt is ready to join any collective effort to address disarmament questions on a balanced basis, with a view to achieving security for all members of the international community, without exception. It is time to speak frankly about unfortunate international and regional positions that have caused the erosion we have been witnessing. But that requires the participation of all parties, particularly nuclear-weapon States, in designing a new international future based on legality and the rule of law.

Mr. Fissenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, to congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the post of Chairperson of the First Committee. You may rely on our support and cooperation.

It is hard to refrain from criticism when speaking about the results of the multilateral forums in the field of international security, arms control and disarmament. We are well aware of the problems

standing in the way of new initiatives, as well as those in the implementation of the treaties that are the foundation of the current international security system.

First of all, I have in mind the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For Belarus, one of the few countries to voluntarily renounce the opportunity to continue to possess nuclear weapons, the implementation of the NPT continues to be of primary importance. Belarus fully implements its obligations under agreements in this field and has initiated the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe.

In this regard, we note with satisfaction the conclusion of the Treaty on the Establishment of a Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Four out of the five Central Asian States are our partners within the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We welcome this step by our partners, and we support the relevant First Committee draft resolution.

As one of the countries most affected by the Chernobyl disaster, Belarus would like to caution against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons for the settlement of any kind of international dispute; this is absolutely unacceptable. Our position is firm, and we intend to defend it, together with our partners.

During the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Havana, heads of State confirmed that the issues of nuclear disarmament take high priority. Efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation should be undertaken in parallel with efforts at nuclear disarmament and should not conflict with the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Belarus fully shares the Movement's approach to the disarmament and international security agenda and aligns itself with statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Unfortunately, the list of issues that should be resolved in order to eliminate nuclear danger is not becoming shorter. The 10 years that have passed since the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) have not been sufficient to bring about its entry into force. Belarus supports the 2006 Ministerial Statement on the CTBT, and we hope to see progress in the signing and ratification of this important Treaty.

Banning of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices remains an important issue on the agenda. Belarus supports the so-called package approach: the Conference on Disarmament should begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and, simultaneously, substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, in the framework of re-established ad hoc committees. We note with satisfaction that the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament became more active last year, but we hope that the fact that in 2006 the Conference on Disarmament adopted only a procedural report will not have irreversible negative consequences for its future work.

It is a long and difficult way from the development of weapons of mass destruction to a full understanding of the threat they pose to peace and the creation of effective, universal international control mechanisms. The price to be paid for continuing on this path is extremely high in terms of human lives, economic resources diverted from development and decades of effort by the international community to establish control over weapons of mass destruction and to ensure their elimination. That is why it is so important to take preventive measures. Belarus has been a sponsor of the draft resolutions on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons.

That draft will be reintroduced to the First Committee for the next time two years from now. The fact that that resolution was, for the first time, not adopted by consensus during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is an alarming signal. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our request for like-minded delegations to support that draft.

We are convinced that the only sure way to decrease the sad consequences of the use of conventional weapons is to ensure the most extensive, multilateral approach in addressing the issues of disarmament and arms control. Although the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference has not produced a result, Belarus confirms its commitment to full implementation of the Programme of Action.

We believe that the problem of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, in violation of arms embargoes, to illegal armed groups and terrorist organizations has always been and remains a matter of concern for the international community. Lawful trade

may be discussed only in the context of combating illegal transfers. Belarus is ready to take part in discussions of relevant initiatives. At the same time, we are convinced that future agreements should not limit the right of States to self-defence and the right of legal trade in arms. Agreements should be based on existing international criteria and principles of conventional weapons control.

Belarus has always stood for universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. We fully implement our obligations under the provisions of that Convention and express our gratitude to the States and organizations that have assisted Belarus in destruction of landmine stockpiles.

In our view, a regional approach to security is both important and necessary. Last year, our country had an opportunity to demonstrate its vision of ways to address the problems of international security during its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Forum for Security Cooperation. This year, we are chairing the Collective Security Treaty Organization, whose activity is of crucial importance for regional security. That organization enjoys observer status in the General Assembly. Belarus attaches great importance to the elaboration of additional bilateral confidence-building measures with neighbouring countries in the area of security. The regional approach is important, but we firmly believe that it should be an integral part of a global approach. We fully reaffirm our commitment to preserving existing United Nations disarmament machinery, namely the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. In conclusion, let me wish all delegations successful and fruitful work at this meeting.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): Let me begin by congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election to important posts in the First Committee during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I am sure that under your wise guidance, the Committee will reach a satisfactory outcome. First and foremost, my delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on Monday. We also wish to associate ourselves with a statement that will be made on Friday by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the ASEAN member States.

Convinced that complete and total disarmament constitutes a solid guarantee for world peace and security, Viet Nam has consistently supported all initiatives and efforts aimed at consolidating commitments towards that goal. We regret, however, that the Conference on Disarmament, the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Weapons and the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference, which was held in New York from 26 June to 7 July this year, did not reach satisfactory results. My delegation believes that the current state of disarmament affairs can be rectified only if genuine political will prevails and cooperative efforts to overcome existing difficulties and obstacles are renewed and redoubled.

Weapons of mass destruction pose the most serious threat to humankind today. We wish to reaffirm our strong commitment to cooperate with the international community to get rid of such dangerous weapons. We also value the role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. Undoubtedly, all States Parties must fully comply with the Treaty's obligations. We are also convinced that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of high priority.

In the meantime, Viet Nam fully recognizes the important role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency and its safeguards in consolidating and enhancing the verification system for the non-proliferation regime. Assistance to non-nuclear-weapon States in peaceful uses of nuclear energy constitutes an important obligation under the NPT. Furthermore, we wish to stress that the NPT has confirmed the right of countries to access without discrimination research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. One of the most significant achievements we have recorded relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. The main objectives and purposes of the Treaty is to promote both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. That Treaty is an important measure to preserve world peace and international security. We are happy to note that there has been a steady increase in the number of signatories and States ratifying the Treaty. We support

the commitments and concerted efforts of the international community towards achieving universal adherence to the Treaty at an early date.

Viet Nam attaches great importance to the CTBT and was one of the first countries to sign the CTBT in 1996. In March this year, Viet Nam deposited its instrument of ratification. This demonstrates Viet Nam's consistent policy of advancing disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, and contributing to international peace and security. My delegation wishes to reiterate that Viet Nam continues to support all efforts and initiatives toward creating a world free from all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. In line with this principle, Viet Nam will continue to work hard with all other countries to enable the CTBT to achieve universal adherence, thus making further contributions to strengthening world peace and security.

We firmly believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones not only make a significant contribution toward achieving regional and international security but also strengthen the NPT regime and the process of total nuclear disarmament.

In this spirit, my delegation wishes to reiterate its strong support for the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as for efforts to implement the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review Conference, so that the Middle East will become a zone free of nuclear weapons. We also welcome the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, on 8 September 2006 and urge all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to fully cooperate with the five Central Asian countries to facilitate the establishment of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. We are glad that over 110 countries have now signed onto nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. We also consider that nuclear-weapon-free zones have significant roles to play in achieving regional and global peace and security.

In this spirit, in 1995, Viet Nam acceded and committed itself to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. At the regional level, Viet Nam is working closely with other Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries to ensure that the South-East Asia region is free from nuclear weapons.

With the entry into force of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as of March 1997, it is our view that the participation of all nuclear-weapon States through their accession to the Protocol of this Treaty is essential in the further strengthening of the confidence-building measures between the nuclear-weapon States and the South-East Asian countries. By doing so, the nuclear-weapon States could further demonstrate their commitments to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) process, enhancing negative security assurances to the countries in South-East Asia. Viet Nam once again welcomes China's announcement of its readiness to accede to the Protocol annexed to the Treaty and calls upon all other nuclear-weapon States to do likewise.

In order to review and assess the implementation of the conclusions of the first special session devoted to disarmament, which took place almost three decades ago, the convening of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament is overdue. We are disappointed by the lack of consensus in the open-ended working group set up by the General Assembly to consider the objectives and agenda of the special session, including the possibility of establishing a preparatory committee. We join many other delegations in calling upon the General Assembly to reconvene the working group to find practical ways to hold the special session as soon as possible.

Finally, we hope that through constructive work, the First Committee at this session will manage to formulate concrete and practical measures to strengthen the regime of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, thus making greater contributions to the consolidation of world peace and security.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to join others in congratulating you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this Committee. From my experience as Chair of this Committee during its previous session, I understand how difficult it is to lead a group of Member States, with their divergent views and interests, through such sensitive issues as disarmament and international security. However, I am confident that your able leadership will guide us through the deliberations ahead towards fruitful results.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems poses an ever-increasing

threat. Weapons currently in existence have the potential to annihilate all of humanity several times over; the possibility of their use by terrorists, who do not hesitate to target innocent civilians, is an undeniable reality. At the same time, the integrity and relevance of the international non-proliferation system, centred on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is being undermined by the non-compliance of some States. The unwillingness of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty is deepening the rift between the nuclear haves and the have-nots. The impasse on the Korean peninsula and the ongoing Iranian nuclear issue continue to overshadow the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight my delegation's position on issues that we deem important.

Despite all the setbacks and challenges, it remains a given fact that the NPT should continue to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and that the regime should be strengthened and improved. In addition to continuing to work on making the NPT universal, we should strive towards the universal adoption of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Additional Protocol, which would enhance global confidence in the NPT system by bolstering its monitoring and verification capabilities.

As practical means of strengthening the non-proliferation regime, priority should be placed on the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as was strongly recommended in the recent report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission headed by Mr. Hans Blix. These steps would significantly strengthen the NPT system and lead us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Parallel efforts should be made to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes for other classes of weapons of mass destruction, particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The CWC has reached near universality, with the recent ratification of the 180th State, covering 98 per cent of the global population, since its entry into force in 1997. As we approach the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force next year, we once again urge those countries outside the CWC to respond to our call and work together with the rest of the international community to achieve the complete elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles from the world.

As for the BWC, my delegation expects that the sixth Review Conference, slated for November of this year, will be a fresh opportunity to review the current status of the Convention. We hope that it will result in a plan of work to make the Convention more viable and relevant.

Our efforts to strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes should be accompanied by measures to enhance the effectiveness of controls on materials and technology related to weapons of mass destruction. Established export control systems, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement should be strengthened. In the area of means of delivery, we support the strengthening of The Hague Code of Conduct and hope to see the number of participating countries further increase in years to come.

The proliferation of conventional weapons is also a matter of increasing concern to the international community. The adoption in 2001 of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and in 2005 of the International Instrument on identifying and tracing small arms were landmarks in addressing the problem of small arms proliferation. Despite the failure to agree to further measures at the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference in July, we should not weaken our commitment to fulfilling the Programme of Action. To this end, my delegation supports the initiative for an international instrument on controlling international arms transfers. The establishment of a group of governmental experts would be a good start for the examination of this issue in detail.

As part of our commitment to multilateralism, the Republic of Korea has been strongly supportive of multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia as a priority in its foreign and security policy. North-East Asia remains in transition characterized by uncertainty and variability. Such multilateral security cooperation in the region would entail intensive discussion and the broad support of the international community. We hope the efforts towards multilateral security cooperation are met with constructive thinking and wholehearted support by the member States in the region and the international community.

Yesterday, 3 October, however, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea declared its intent to conduct a nuclear test in the future. The Government of the Republic of Korea has expressed its profound concern and regret, as the declaration is tantamount to an abrogation of the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The Republic of Korea is engaged in in-depth consultations with concerned States on ways to resume the Six-Party Talks and to implement the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement. Pyongyang's declaration runs counter to such efforts to seek a resolution through dialogue. My Government strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to show restraint and refrain from any action that might aggravate tension, to return immediately to the Six-Party Talks without preconditions and to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing weapons programmes as stipulated in Security Council resolution 1695 (2006).

Mr. Chaouachi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Tunisian delegation, Madam, I offer you my most sincere congratulations upon your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. You may be assured of my delegation's support and cooperation in accomplishing your mandate so that the outcome of our work may be satisfactory. My delegation associates itself with the statements made yesterday on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and on behalf of the African Group.

Tunisia has always considered that the arms race is carried out at the expense of the most basic needs of the civilian population. It has always considered it appropriate to divert resources allocated to military expenditures towards development and economic growth.

Difficulties continue to stand in the way of the multilateral process of disarmament. My delegation continues to believe that agreed multilateral solutions in accordance with the United Nations Charter provide the best means of settling, in a lasting manner, many disarmament and international security issues.

At the September 2005 World Summit, the international community once again missed an opportunity to set precise objectives with a view to reviving the disarmament and non-proliferation process, which — we do not need to be reminded — has slowed over the past few years. Three months earlier, in May 2005, we had seen the failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Likewise, last summer Member States witnessed a new failure at the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Concerning another issue, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force 10 years after its adoption. At the same time, the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, is still having difficulties establishing a balanced programme of work that is accepted by all. Finally, the Disarmament Commission, through a lack of political will and flexibility on the part of several countries, is having difficulty commencing its new negotiating cycle.

If we proceed to an evaluation of the nuclear disarmament situation over the last three decades, we are bound to note a lack of tangible progress. We are still far from the goals set by the NPT and its Review Conferences, in particular concerning the issue of nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control. In that framework, we repeat our appeal for full implementation of the commitment the nuclear-weapon States made at the 2000 Review Conference to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

While waiting for the elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, non-nuclear States are entitled to call for effective guarantees against the use or threat of use of those weapons. At the same time, we emphasize that the development of new types of nuclear weapons runs counter to the guarantees given by the nuclear-weapon States when the CTBT was concluded, namely that the Treaty would prevent the further improvement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

In the same spirit, we note how important it is that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force and become universal, 10 years after its adoption.

My country recently took part in the 20 September 2006 meeting at United Nations Headquarters to adopt a Joint Ministerial Statement in support of the CTBT, which my country fully supports.

In another area, the conclusion of a treaty banning the production and stocking of fissile material

for military purposes remains a goal to be achieved. Indeed, such a treaty is still not even being negotiated. Agreement on a treaty should be accelerated with a view to the effective and swift elimination of nuclear weapons.

We also believe it is time to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament in order to find ways to relaunch the multilateral disarmament process. In that respect, we hope that an open-ended working group on the issue will be established and will succeed in formulating positive recommendations along those lines.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned and the creation of zones free of all weapons of mass destruction constitute an important means of promoting non-proliferation and disarmament at the regional and international levels and can help strengthen the NPT regime. In that respect, the Middle East remains one of the regions most affected, because of the refusal of Israel to join the NPT and to place its nuclear installations under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, despite the many appeals of other States of the region and the appeals made by the General Assembly in its numerous resolutions on this issue. In that respect we call upon the international community, in particular the influential Powers to take urgent and practical measures for the creation of such a zone.

Tunisia understands the importance of the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and its benefits for international peace and security, and it was quick to ratify the Convention and has destroyed its stocks of anti-personnel mines. Tunisia hopes that all States parties will take part in the process leading to the attainment of the Convention's goals.

My country is contributing actively to the efforts of Mediterranean countries to provide a comprehensive, coordinated and concerted response to the challenges that face them all, with a view to making the Mediterranean basin a space for dialogue, exchange and cooperation, thus guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity in the region. My country will continue to play its role in favour of the cause of peace and disarmament. We reaffirm our readiness to cooperate fully with the Chair of the Committee and the other members of the Bureau and we wish the Committee success in its work.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the Chairmanship and congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My delegation is ready to assist you in the accomplishment of your delicate tasks.

Our delegation subscribes to the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, we would like to highlight the interest of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in a number of international security and disarmament issues. The importance we attach to this matter is reflected in article 129 of the 1999 national constitution, which states that the State shall prevent the entry into the country of toxic and harmful waste, as well as the production and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The existence of nuclear weapons threatens humanity's survival, and the only real assurance against the use or threat of use of such weapons is their total destruction. We ask that no further new nuclear weapons be developed and for existing weapons to be destroyed. We are convinced that the most effective way to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world would be for all States, without exception, to comply with the multilateral agreements that have been negotiated in this area and to respect their provisions and apply them in full. To that end, we should spare no effort to bring about the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the timely entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

In this regard, nuclear States should implement the 13 practical steps set out in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. At the same time, it is crucial that effective assurances be provided to the non-nuclear-weapon States with regard to the non-use or threat of use of such weapons. In this context, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the most effective ways to eliminate the presence of such weapons. We are also of the view that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are intrinsically linked and should be addressed in tandem, and in an integrated manner, given that the threat posed by these weapons arises through their very existence. We uphold the inalienable right of countries to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and reject any disregard for the sovereignty of countries and their legitimate

right to develop technologies and energies that they view as necessary for their sustainable development.

Our country does not have any chemical weapons either, although we do have a sizeable chemical industry. In November 2005, we established the National Authority for the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and we expect a special law regulating chemical weapons to be promulgated in the first half of 2007.

In 2004 and 2005, we submitted annual declarations on the use of chemicals that are subject to the Convention, and we are preparing a new report to be presented in coming months. Moreover, in March 2006, inspectors of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) carried out their second visit to Venezuela. The inspection activities were carried out in a climate of cooperation and transparency, and the inspectors concluded that our country is strictly complying with its obligations under the Convention.

Venezuela supports international efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. However, we wish to stress that only in a multilateral, inclusive and non-discriminatory forum can we make progress in the conclusion of agreements in this area. We are concerned by the recourse to unilateral solutions and to selective and discriminatory approaches to preventing proliferation. This undermines multilateralism and international cooperation in this area. We also have reservations about the trend to transfer disarmament and non-proliferation issues to the Security Council, a forum in which United Nations Member States are unable to participate on an equal footing.

Multilateralism must be the basic principle in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this respect, we fully support the role of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized, democratic deliberative forum for discussion of disarmament and international security matters. Likewise, we reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament; we are concerned at the lack of flexibility demonstrated by certain States that have blocked the consensus we need to adopt the programme of work of the Conference.

Our country recognizes the negative impact that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has had on certain countries, and we have joined multilateral efforts to combat this problem. We are implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and last April we submitted our most recent national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Venezuela considers that the State bears the main responsibility for adopting measures to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in these weapons, while national institutions are responsible for their implementation. We believe that international cooperation is an important element that contributes effectively to combating this illicit activity, and we consider that this cooperation should fully respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. In particular, it should take account of the principles of the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. At the same time, this cooperation should take account of the specific circumstances and features, the needs and experiences of different countries, regions and subregions.

Moreover, it is necessary to respect the sovereign right of States to produce, import and possess small arms and light weapons that they consider necessary to meet their self-defence and security needs. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns outright the implementation by any State of unilateral measures that would undermine that right. We believe that the authorities in States where the main manufacturers are located should incorporate in their legislation regulations on the adequate marking of weapons before their exportation, in order to facilitate the tracing of these weapons and in order to prevent their diversion to the black market. In addition, Venezuela believes that ammunition is an integral part of the problem and that measures to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are incomplete if they fail to address the matter of ammunition.

As a responsible State, Venezuela is committed to preserve the environment for present and future generations. We reaffirm the need to continue adopting the necessary measures to advance in the areas of disarmament and international security, without jeopardizing either the environment or the real contribution that such measures can make to sustainable development. Moreover, we believe that

progress made in the area of science and technology for civilian purposes should benefit humankind, thus contributing to the economic and social development of peoples.

We reject the establishment of technology export control regimes; they are inherently discriminatory and infringe upon the sovereign right of nations to make use of new technologies for peaceful purposes.

We are also of the view that States with major space technology should refrain from placing any defensive or offensive military systems in outer space. They should also undertake to provide information about their activities in that area. We support the adoption of stronger transparency and confidence-building measures relating to outer space activities and support all international efforts towards the conclusion of a binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. Such an instrument would help significantly in strengthening the legal regime in that area.

In conclusion, we reiterate our firm support for general and complete disarmament. We are committed to uphold our principles on disarmament and international security and we shall continue to participate actively within the United Nations system in order to bring about a safer and more peaceful multipolar world. Venezuela is an independent voice for social justice, for peace and for security.

Ms. Loke (Singapore): Let me begin, Madam, by congratulating you on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. My delegation looks forward to working with you. We are confident in your leadership and assure you of our cooperation.

There often is a sense of deep resignation within the First Committee. That is a result of how little we seem to achieve from year to year. Several speakers have already referred to examples such as the failure to mention disarmament and non-proliferation in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). More recently, there was the failure of the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons to agree on a final document.

Those speakers were right to point out that progress has been slow. Yet, I do not wish to succumb to pessimism. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, has already admonished us against taking that approach. He has said that we are not powerless in the face of these issues.

I agree. The reality is that disarmament and non-proliferation are serious issues with myriad implications, national and global. That is why discussions are often sensitive and contentious. Admittedly, that often results in slow progress. But on the flip side, it also means that there is broad and serious engagement. There is recognition that these issues matter. There is understanding that these issues extend beyond national borders.

In that context, I hope we can find pragmatic ways to move forward together. There are common areas of interest. For example, we all find ourselves in a different security environment than before. In the past, we tended to focus almost exclusively on States. That was natural, since States were the main actors. But today, security issues tend to extend further afield. Clearly, States are no longer the only actors. Non-State actors are a concern to us all.

What would happen if a non-State actor acquired a weapon of mass destruction? That is a chilling thought. Many countries represented here have already been subjected to terrorist attacks. Those attacks have not been geographically limited. Many of us — from Asia to Africa, from Latin America to Europe and North America — have suffered as a result of attacks or have been targeted at one point or another. Thankfully, if I can even use the term, these have been conventional attacks. Imagine the greater devastation if they had not been. Let me repeat: we all have a stake in preventing such acts.

In the current environment, global efforts are crucial. We need to recognize that disarmament and non-proliferation go together. It will be difficult to have progress on one without the other. States with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) should recognize that the existence of vast quantities of such weapons is a source of deep disquiet. States without WMDs should realize that having them often adds nothing to their security. Both sides need to be pragmatic and to try to build confidence. There are already multilateral initiatives that we can build on. Examples are the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). The world also awaits the coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-

Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), 10 years after its adoption by the General Assembly. We can also seize the opportunity of the BTWC Review Conference to be held later this year to minimize the dangers of the misuse of biotechnology.

As Mr. Tanaka has said, we are not powerless. We have, as a community, already made progress in addressing threats of WMD proliferation to non-State actors. Singapore welcomes the extension of the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004) via Security Council resolution 1673 (2006). We are also heartened by the General Assembly's adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in April 2005. We urge Member States to take steps to ensure the follow-through of these instruments.

As a small country with an open and trade-dependent economy, Singapore is acutely aware of the dangers posed by WMDs. We have tried to take measures to mitigate those dangers. We have banned the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons. We have also tightened our export control system. Our Strategic Goods Control Act covers export, re-export, trans-shipment, transit and brokering, as well as intangible technology transfers involving strategic goods and items suspected of WMD end-use. We participate in the Container Security Initiative and the Megaports Initiative. We participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative. In line with article XI of the CWC, we have been holding the Singapore International Symposium on Protection Against Toxic Substances since 1998.

The United Nations has a vital role in global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The United Nations is an Organization with a global mandate and international legitimacy. The fact that we are all here today discussing these issues is proof positive. I hope that we can work together in building effective and cooperative disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. It is in our common interest to do so.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): It pleases me, at the outset, Madam, to offer you my sincere congratulations upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish you every success in your mission. In addition, I extend congratulations to the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur on their elections. My thanks go also to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his admirable efforts on disarmament issues and for the comprehensive statement he made at the beginning of the general debate of the First Committee. I wish him every success in his work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The serious challenges facing the world concerning the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a severe threat to international peace and security. The international community, as represented by the United Nations and its organs, has not achieved any qualitative success in controlling the proliferation of those weapons. On the contrary, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues apace despite international conventions and treaties regulating it.

We can identify a number of reasons for the current imbalance, in which some States and Governments are flouting agreements and conventions on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). One of the most important reasons is the lack of real political will to honour the moral commitments set out in those documents and in the agreed outcomes of disarmament conferences. The fact that no punitive measures or sanctions have been imposed against States that have violated those instruments reveals variable objectivity and neutrality. Employing double standards by ignoring some States while focusing on others leads to a lack of confidence in these agreements and conventions. The fact that no concrete practical steps have been taken concerning the pledge of some nuclear-weapon States to give up their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction represents a form of imbalance and injustice towards non-nuclear-weapon States, which find themselves under constant threat by nuclear-weapon States. Among the reasons for the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York, were the failure of nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments and the lack of emphasis on the outcomes of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

We believe that regional disarmament initiatives are valuable and must be always emphasized, because they reflect trust among national Governments within a region. There are many excellent examples of nuclear-

weapon-free zones, such as those that have been established in Africa, South America and Central Asia.

Unfortunately, the situation in the Middle East is quite different, because that region could, like an active volcano, explode at any moment owing to a serious imbalance of power, in addition to a lack of confidence-building measures as a result of the occupation and confiscation of territory from its rightful owners. The fact that the international community has ignored the existence of Israeli nuclear arsenal in the Middle East has caused frustration and mistrust vis-à-vis international agreements and conventions. At a time when people are calling forcefully for the imposition of sanctions against certain States for attempting to acquire nuclear technology, we find flagrant disregard for Israel's possession of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons; no one has called upon it to renounce such weapons. To the contrary, there is covert and open cooperation with Israel, which reflects a flagrant contradiction in position and a lack of credibility. Therefore, my delegation wishes to stress that it is essential to eliminate all forms of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The rules must be applied to all States without exception in order to buttress the credibility of these conventions.

In highlighting the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, we must not minimize the importance of the fact that the proliferation of conventional weapons — including small arms and light weapons and landmines in all their forms — also poses a threat to international peace and security, particularly when such weapons fall into the hands of criminal gangs or terrorist groups and when State Governments or institutions fail or collapse. The challenges represented by the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons exacerbate tension in any State or community and have a great impact on their security. That is particularly the case in environments where tension exists due to economic and social inequities or a lack of political rights for minorities. The failure of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in June 2006, to reach any valuable conclusions was another blow to United Nations efforts and only highlighted its inability to control that illegal trade.

Confidence is needed on the part of national Governments and States in order to control the arms race. It is the absence of such confidence and the presence of fear that compel States to possess the most sophisticated and lethal weapons. My delegation believes that the best way to control the arms race is to seek to resolve seemingly intractable international political disputes by persuading the parties to resort to dialogue and to resolve their problems as swiftly as possible through diplomacy.

Mr. Lara-Peña (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the Committee at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Through you, I also take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

In his recent address to the General Assembly (see A/61/PV.13), our President spoke of the erosion of the internal security of nations, leading to increased violence and criminality — a situation fuelled by drug trafficking, the illicit traffic of arms and the trafficking of persons, among other factors.

Using all the resources provided by the United Nations, we must establish the measures and controls necessary to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, because such weapons are one of the principal elements undermining security among our citizens. As President Fernández Reyna indicated in his statement, the Dominican Republic remains vigilant in this ongoing struggle and urges the international community to strengthen the control and prevention mechanisms needed to meet these modern challenges.

Addressing this type of threat, which affects many communities throughout the world, requires a global response supported by the entire international community and made by the Organization best suited for that purpose by virtue of its uniqueness: the United Nations. Therefore, we express our deep disappointment that no consensus could be reached on a final document of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We stress the importance of determining, as soon as possible, what follow-up should be given to the Programme of Action.

Here, we should reiterate that multilateralism, as the most democratic and participatory means at our

disposal, must remain the instrument that continues to guide our commitment as members of the great family of humanity seeking to resolve our common problems. It was the use of that resource that recently enabled the Security Council to adopt and implement its resolution 1701 (2006), which expanded the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, provided for the establishment of a cessation of hostilities and alleviated the suffering of the people affected by that crisis. In that connection, I must acknowledge the tireless diligence of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to that end.

Of course, in addition to the willingness of the Secretary-General, it would be ideal to have a General Assembly that was capable of exercising all its powers, enjoyed greater flexibility in its relations with the Security Council and had greater capacity to adopt binding decisions. Our world has survived the cold war, but other dangers lie in wait. Terrorism affects us all and is a threat to all of us, but, as was said last year in this very same forum, hunger and extreme poverty continue to fuel terrorism. If we are able to resolve these long-standing difficulties, then we shall be able to make progress towards general peace and security. There are other problems that are of concern to us, such as the use of nuclear energy for non-peaceful ends. In the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Latin America and Caribbean region established an instrument that can be used to protect our continent from the threat of nuclear weapons. This is a commitment shared by all countries of the region and which could provide an example for all countries. It is our most fervent wish that similar agreements be concluded in all those regions that have not yet assumed such a commitment, a failure that endangers the destinies of millions of people. In this regard, we would like to congratulate Central Asia as the most recent region to declare itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

As agreed upon at the fourteenth summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, we recognize the inalienable right that all States have to develop and use nuclear energy for purely peaceful means through rigorous respect for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The IAEA is the only body that enjoys recognized authority in this area. Any other use or threat of use of this energy, including disregard for the authority that is entrusted by the IAEA to the international community, must be firmly rejected.

The Caribbean Sea is a large sub-oceanic basin with a surface area of approximately 1.02 million square miles. The Caribbean is a fragile and complex marine area among the large seas and adjoining bays on the western side of the Atlantic. It is shared by some 40 different countries, States and territories of differing size and at different stages of economic development, which to a large extent depend on the Caribbean Sea for their social, economic and environmental well-being. One of the most delicate aspects facing us with regard to the use of the Caribbean Sea is the variety of uses made by the States in the region. For example, there is one group of countries that, owing to their territorial size, depend closely on the preservation of the Caribbean. Sustainable management of the Caribbean is vital to ensure the survival of that group of countries. There is a group of countries that attach great importance to sustainable tourism and greatly depend on this sector. There is another group of countries that attach great importance to the use and exploitation of the seabed's mineral resources, especially oil and natural gas. All States in the region attach importance to shipping.

For all of these reasons, our Governments are seeking to ensure that the Caribbean is declared a special area in the context of sustainable development. This concept of a special area would mean that the Caribbean is recognized as a semi-closed sea, including its resources and adjacent coastal areas, which for technical reasons stemming from its oceanographic and ecological condition would require the adoption of special mandatory measures to ensure the preservation and sustainable development of this area, paying due consideration to economic, social and environmental considerations.

The Dominican Republic is one of the islands surrounded by the Caribbean Sea. That is part of our wealth. Thanks to this sea, the Dominican Republic has become an important centre for tourism, and the preservation of the Caribbean Sea is vital for us, for our neighbours and for all of those who come to enjoy our beaches. For that reason and as has been said earlier, we are particularly concerned about the security and quality of our sea. In this respect, we call once again upon the international community to exercise due vigilance in order to guarantee implementation of all security measures pertaining to the transportation of radioactive material and harmful waste, as established by the IAEA and the International Maritime

Organization, as well as through the adoption of regulations that complement those measures.

In addition, we support the initiative launched by the Association of Caribbean States to submit a draft resolution that would declare and call for international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. Because of the importance and dependence that many of our countries have for the Caribbean Sea, it is not a mere intellectual or academic exercise to preserve the Caribbean environment and ecosystem. This should rather be seen in the context of for an economic security strategy for all our Governments. For these reasons, we encourage those delegations also working with the Second Committee to support this draft resolution.

The Dominican Republic has special interest in matters pertaining to pollution of the marine environment, exchange of information on sea routes, communication of contingency plans in the event of mishap, the commitment to clean up in the event of a spill, decontamination of affected areas and the establishment of effective mechanisms and regulations for liability in the event of damage. In the same spirit of cooperation, we would like to conclude by expressing the willingness of the delegation of the Dominican Republic to contribute to the success of our work.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): My delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election to preside over the work of the 2006 session of the First Committee. I also wish to fully associate myself with the general statements delivered on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

This meeting of the First Committee comes at a time when the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime continues to face a number of challenges. It takes place against the backdrop of a lack of any substantive outcome at the 2005 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as well as the failure of last year's High-level Summit to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement on a programme of work underscores these challenges, as does the decade-long delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The recent outcome — or rather the lack of it — of the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference may be added to this growing list of setbacks. Furthermore, during the past few years we have witnessed a growing trend to focus almost exclusively on the non-proliferation provisions of relevant internationally legally binding instruments, especially those relating to weapons of mass destruction. Whilst South Africa remains fully committed to the continuous review and strengthening of measures aimed at preventing the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, we believe that real progress in securing our world from the threat of these weapons can be achieved only through concomitant progress in the area of disarmament.

As a country that has foregone the nuclear weapons option, democratic South Africa has always believed that nuclear weapons have no role in today's world's security order. We, therefore, call on all Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to fulfil and implement each and every obligation under the Treaty, as the success of the Treaty depends on the fulfilment of all of its objectives. Equally important is full implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament that were agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In order for efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons proliferation to be sustainable, equal efforts must be made to eliminate the nuclear weapons themselves.

There is growing unease that, while demands are being made for non-nuclear-weapon States to agree to new measures aimed at non-proliferation, concrete and equivalent actions towards nuclear disarmament are neglected. In that regard, my country views the three pillars of the NPT — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — as indispensable for the maintenance of the equilibrium of the global security regime, for without each of those pillars, the Treaty would not have come into being.

South Africa wishes to reiterate that it does not support unwarranted restrictions on the NPT's guaranteed access to nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes by States that are fully compliant with all their obligations under the Treaty. The imposition of additional restrictive measures on some NPT States parties, while allowing others to have access to those capabilities,

can serve only to exacerbate existing inequalities that are already inherent in the NPT and to undermine one of the central bargains contained in the Treaty.

We are therefore concerned that proposals are being made, not least those related to the use of sensitive material and technologies, which may infringe on the inalienable right of all countries to the peaceful uses of such technologies, consistent with their Treaty obligations. We should guard against the subjective notion that such sensitive materials and technologies are safe in the hands of some States, but pose a risk when others have access to them. A determination as to whether those sensitive materials and technologies are safe in the hands of certain States can be made only on the basis of whether they are indeed intended for use or are already being used in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

In that regard, the relevant international institutions responsible for verifying that such materials and technologies are not diverted to non-peaceful activities, including the IAEA and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), continue to play a central role in providing the necessary assurances.

On another matter, my delegation remains concerned at the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work and to commence substantive negotiations on disarmament issues. Nevertheless, we have been somewhat encouraged by the more constructive and focused deliberations that have taken place at the Conference this year. South Africa is honoured to assume the Conference presidency in 2007. As the first President for next year's session of the Conference, we will, with the cooperation and support of all States parties, exert all possible efforts and examine all options to try and resolve the deadlock that has existed in the Conference for far too long. In that regard, I may mention that my delegation intends to conduct consultations with members of the Conference on Disarmament on the way forward during the margins of this session of the First Committee. In that context, I can only appeal to all delegations to show maximum flexibility, compromise and political will in order to break the impasse that will allow the Conference on Disarmament to get back to work.

In the field of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, South Africa will this year have the responsibility to introduce, in consultation with and on behalf of the other two coordinators of the annual First Committee omnibus small arms resolution — Colombia and Japan — that draft resolution during this session. We firmly believe that we cannot allow the fact that we were unable to agree on a final report at this year's Review Conference to detract from the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. In addition, the importance of the resolution as the main implementation framework for the Programme of Action and its follow-up has not diminished.

Accordingly, our intention is to reaffirm the importance of the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, as well as the international instrument to trace illicit small arms and light weapons; to express support for the process on the illicit brokering that will commence soon; as well as emphasizing the necessity to maintain the relevance of the consultative process on the implementation of the Programme of Action, in particular the agreed system of the biennial meetings of States.

As we approach the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), we believe that we need to take serious stock of our progress since the previous Review Conference in 2001. Indeed, we managed to negotiate and adopt Protocol V on explosive remnants of war in November 2003, but we have also noted since then the slow progress on other CCW issues being considered by the Group of Governmental Experts. We trust that the forthcoming Review Conference will afford the opportunity to achieve substantive progress on outstanding issues and stand ready to engage with other delegations to make such progress a reality.

Regarding the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), South Africa believes that the Sixth Review Conference, due to take place later this year, will afford States parties to the Convention an opportunity to strengthen that very important disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. The Conference will present the first opportunity since 1996 for States parties to do a thorough review of the Convention. As the international security environment has changed substantially in the past

decade, South Africa accords great importance to the review and strengthening of the BWC.

With reference to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), South Africa will later this month be hosting a seminar for southern African States parties to the CWC on national implementation measures under the Convention. We are organizing the seminar in cooperation with the secretariat of the OPCW and with the assistance of the Netherlands. The aim of the seminar is to increase awareness of the CWC amongst the senior policy-makers in States parties from southern Africa and to consider a plan of action to harmonize the implementation of the CWC within the Southern Africa Development Community subregion.

We appreciate the difficulties that some possessor States are experiencing with regard to the destruction programmes of their chemical weapons stockpiles. We, however, urge them to ensure that their chemical weapons stockpiles are destroyed within the agreed time frames and as soon as possible.

In conclusion, our efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation to date appear to have been less than sterling, and surely much more could and should be done to ensure a safer world for all our citizens. We cannot continue to conduct business as usual and remain oblivious to the fact that our business has virtually come to a standstill. We must intensify our international efforts and re-invest in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In that way, we may succeed if we can show the necessary flexibility, compromise and political will.

Mr. Uras (Turkey): Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. You can be assured of my delegation's full support as you steer the work of the Committee to its successful conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Under-Secretary-General, Ambassador Tanaka, and to wish him every success in his new post.

Turkey has already aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore elaborate on some issues from our national perspective.

Turkey favours overall global disarmament and supports all efforts in the field of sustaining international security through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Turkey is a party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export-control regimes and wishes to see the universalization and effective implementation of those instruments.

Located in a region of particular concern with respect to proliferation, Turkey vigilantly monitors developments in this field and takes part in collective efforts aimed at devising measures to reverse the alarming trend.

Despite the failure of the Review Conference last year and recent developments contesting its standpoint, Turkey believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is still a unique and irreplaceable multilateral instrument, the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We should exert every effort to protect its integrity and credibility. Turkey sincerely hopes that the new review cycle of the NPT to be initiated next year will prepare the ground for a successful Review Conference in 2010 through early agreement on many pending issues.

In that respect, let me underline the critical and indispensable role of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Turkey remains convinced that the verification authority of the Agency should be further strengthened and the Model Additional Protocol adopted as the universal norm for verifying compliance with the NPT.

Turkey supports the establishment in the Middle East of an effectively verifiable zone free of WMDs and their means of delivery, and encourages all efforts to develop a common regional understanding on this project, with the participation of all parties concerned.

Turkey welcomes the establishment last September by five Central Asian States of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone. Turkey also welcomes the extension of the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004) and will continue to support its work, which we believe complements global efforts against the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery.

Turkey regards the Proliferation Security Initiative as an important cooperative action complementing the existing mechanisms enshrined in various international instruments and export control regimes. We will continue to support the Initiative.

Similarly, Turkey has voiced its support for the recently announced Global Initiative to Combat

Nuclear Terrorism and has expressed its readiness to host the second meeting of the Initiative in Turkey.

Turkey attaches special importance to the negotiation of a non-discriminatory and universal treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The banning of the production of such material would strengthen both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. A more comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach should include the issues of existing stockpiles and verification.

Turkey considers the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) as two important components of the global system against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The non-accession of some States to these Conventions continues to pose a serious challenge to global security. Once again, we reiterate our call for wider adherence to, and effective implementation of, those Conventions. The Chemical Weapons Convention has proved to be an effective instrument for prohibiting and eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under a strict and efficient international verification and control mechanism. Compliance by signatories with the deadlines established for the verifiable destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles remains essential. The sixth Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Review Conference will commence in Geneva in November. We believe that the BTWC too needs to be strengthened with a verification mechanism.

The progressive increase in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles makes the proliferation threat all the more worrying. Turkey believes that the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation constitutes a practical step towards an internationally accepted legal framework in this field. We wish to see the universalization of the Hague Code of Conduct.

Conventional weapons proliferation is also a cause of concern for Turkey. The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. There is also a close relationship between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism. Turkey will continue to contribute actively to all efforts within the United Nations and other forums to foster international cooperation and the establishment of effective norms and rules, with a view to combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all their aspects. The failure to achieve tangible results at last year's Review Conference was disappointing. Nonetheless, Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Cognizant of the damage that small arms inflict on peace and security worldwide, Turkey supports the project of agreeing on an arms trade treaty that aims to cease the unregulated and uncontrolled trade of arms worldwide and establish common standards for the global trade in conventional arms. The proliferation and unauthorized use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) continues to be a matter of serious concern in connection with small arms and light weapons. Turkey maintains the view that the international community should act decisively to improve stockpile security and strengthen export controls in countries that import or manufacture MANPADS.

Another worrying issue in the field of conventional weapons is the scourge of the indiscriminate and inhumane weapons known as anti-personnel landmines. Turkey fully supports efforts towards the universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention and the vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines. Turkey became a party to the Ottawa Convention in 2004. Yet, mine clearance activities have been under way in Turkey since 1998. The work in Turkey to clear all emplaced anti-personnel landmines is planned for completion by 2014, in line with our commitments deriving from the Convention.

In this context, I should also emphasize that, since rights and obligations enshrined in the Convention and in the Nairobi Action Plan apply to States parties when engagement with armed non-State actors is contemplated, the States parties concerned should be informed; their consent would be necessary in order for such an engagement to take place. Activities conducted within the scope of the implementation of the Ottawa Convention should in no way serve the purposes of terrorist organizations.

I would also like to inform the First Committee that Turkey has become a State party to the Convention

on Certain Conventional Weapons as amended in 2001, Protocol I, Amended Protocol II and Protocol IV. This Convention, along with the Protocols that I have just mentioned, entered into force for Turkey on 2 September 2005.

My intervention would not be complete without a reference to our support for the system of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This tool in hand is, in our view, a very useful mechanism for completing our work in this field.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, let me assure you once again of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Madam, permit me to offer you the warmest congratulations of the Algerian delegation on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee and to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our full and complete cooperation in ensuring a successful outcome in our work. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Choi Young-jin, for his efforts in guiding the work of the Committee at the last session. Also, I cannot fail to wish Mr. Nobuake Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, great success in his new functions.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the delegations of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively.

One year ago, the General Assembly World Summit gave our leaders the opportunity to reassert their allegiance to the rule of law and the multilateral system and to make a solemn commitment to move ahead in confronting the threats and challenges the world faces today.

Today, it is most regrettable to note that, in a disturbing international situation fraught with consequences for international peace and security, the multilateral disarmament process is becoming increasingly uncertain and is showing disturbing signs of running out of breath. Fateful words such as failure and impasse have been heard in many statements delivered since the opening of this session. They are a sign of the frustration and disenchantment that is overcoming countries whose commitment to disarmament is being put to a severe test.

Apart from the lethargy of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, and the lamentable failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the multilateral disarmament process has yet again been damaged by the frustrating outcome of the Review Conference on the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms. This most recent pitfall is significant because it relates to an area that previously benefited from multilateral consensus.

The deadlock in multilateral disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, is the logical consequence of an international situation that is less and less favourable to progress in the cause of disarmament, where the principles of multilateralism and the promotion of the rule of law no longer seem to enjoy unanimous support.

We are convinced that, in the absence of concrete multilateral action to launch a process leading to realization of the objectives set in conformity with article VI of the NPT, those negative developments seriously compromise the hopes that arose in the positive climate that resulted from the end of the cold war and the important decisions taken at the NPT Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000.

Consequently, we reiterate our legitimate concern at the deadlock, for there has been no implementation whatsoever of even one of the 13 steps agreed upon by all States parties at the sixth Review Conference of the NPT with a view to the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Let us recall that that commitment was firmly supported in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, whose tenth anniversary we marked this year.

Pending attainment of that objective, the non-nuclear States are unconditionally entitled to credible and effective security guarantees from the nuclear-weapon States; these must not be open to interpretation. We firmly believe that the complete elimination of those weapons and general and complete disarmament constitute the only option that can benefit future generations. That objective is still within reach, so long as States display political will and so long as we see goodwill and the initiatives to which it leads.

Clearly, that means we must rehabilitate the multilateral framework for negotiation in the area of disarmament. Here, the Conference on Disarmament is

the right place to find comprehensive, lasting solutions to disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Moreover, we remain convinced that building international peace and security through respect for and the scrupulous implementation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation commitments necessarily involves a comprehensive, balanced and non-selective approach to the terms of the NPT. That requires a joint international effort to promote technological cooperation and scientific exchanges, in order to ensure that all States have the possibility to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Then, those among us who have renounced military use of the atom and have opted to develop its peaceful uses will be convinced that they made the right choice in 1995, when they voted in favour of the unlimited extension of the NPT.

The concept of recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of agreements freely entered into can strengthen international peace and security and also unquestionably contribute to attaining the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that respect, we are pleased to note that nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the South Pacific, in Central Asia, in South-East Asia and in Africa.

With regard specifically to Africa, Algeria was among the States that actively contributed to the drafting and adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which it ratified in 1998. We are fully involved in the endeavours and initiatives to promote the prompt implementation of that important instrument.

Moreover, owing to the geographical proximity and close links between Africa and the Middle East, Algeria remains concerned about the absence of progress in creating a similar zone in the Middle East. It is now more necessary than ever, given the present context, that the international community send a strong signal calling upon Israel to comply with international law and remove the main — perhaps the only — obstacle in the way of the achievement of that important goal, and thus contribute to strengthening peace and stability in that particularly turbulent region.

Algeria is resolutely committed to fulfilling all of its obligations under the international instruments to which it is a party. It will spare no effort within the multilateral bodies of the United Nations in supporting and promoting initiatives to revive the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process. My country's unshakeable commitment to the promotion of international peace and security is a constant factor in its foreign policy and a cardinal principle for our international action to promote dialogue and cooperation and to strengthen security within traditional frameworks of membership and solidarity in the Maghreb, the Mediterranean and Africa.

In that spirit, my country has joined the international community in its efforts to curb the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, whose destabilizing effects seriously threaten international peace and security, in particular on the African continent.

Moreover, in accordance with its international obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, in 2005 Algeria completed the destruction of its anti-personnel mine stockpile, six months before the deadline set by the Convention. It also hosted the ceremony for the establishment of the anti-personnel mine observatory.

Before concluding, I would like to wish the Committee every success. It is our hope that its outcome will revive the disarmament process.

Mr. Mine (Japan): First, I thank Committee members for their indulgence in giving us the opportunity to make a further statement. In the light of the increasing need for the First Committee to respond to the realities we face in the international community in an effective and timely manner so that this Committee will not lose its relevance, Japan would like to draw the special attention of all member States to the statement issued yesterday by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding their intention to conduct nuclear testing.

The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed his country's view on that matter a few minutes ago. Japan too expresses its deep concern over the statement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Should the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conduct a nuclear test, it would pose a great threat to the peace and security not only of Japan but also of the entire region and beyond. At the same time, it would surely constitute a serious challenge to the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Nuclear testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is totally unacceptable. Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from conducting any nuclear testing. Japan strongly urges that country to implement faithfully Security Council resolution 1695 (2006), in particular by returning immediately and without precondition to the Six-Party Talks and implementing fully the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of 19 September 2005, in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea committed itself to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and returning to the NPT and to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

Japan requests all member States to monitor closely the development of this matter and to promptly respond to this serious challenge to international peace and security, which the First Committee is tasked to address.

The Chairperson: I would like to remind representatives that we have a very long list of speakers for tomorrow and Friday. That is why it is especially important that we start on time on both days. I intend to start at 10 a.m. sharp. I would also remind delegations of the need to observe the time limit for statements.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.5

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee
5th meeting
Thursday, 5 October 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Ms. Ziv (Israel): Madam Ambassador and friend, allow me to begin by saying how pleased I am to see you chairing the First Committee. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

In its efforts to promote peace and security through multilateralism, the international community has taken two major approaches. The first is of a more ideological character and has the long-term objective of creating a safer world. The second approach is of a more defensive and realistic character. It is aimed at discerning the most urgent and imminent threats to international security and stability, and finding the most appropriate and effective remedy for them.

For example, the issues of nuclear disarmament and of identifying the root causes of terrorism fall under the first track, whereas strict and responsible export control over sensitive technologies and a ban on the transfer of weapons to terrorists fall under the second.

Israel believes that setting long-term goals would contribute to international and regional stability and security. At the same time, it is clear that striving to achieve long-term goals without first identifying the real and present threats facing us would not be effective. Only when those threats are properly addressed will we be able seriously to engage in the process of dealing with the long-term goals of creating a safer world for all.

The threats we face in our regional environment are, unfortunately, often of an existential character and therefore require a realistic, step-by-step approach. Once threats are identified, modest and gradual measures should be proposed and applied in order to create a new reality based on dialogue and good neighbourliness. Such a reality is vital. Without it, effective regional disarmament and arms control discussions cannot take place.

Artificial attempts to ignore our regional realities cannot contribute to the achievement of long-term goals and could be counterproductive. We believe that two main issues must be accorded the highest priority in the area of international peace and stability: terrorism in all its dimensions, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

This year, the risks to regional and global stability resulting from these two evils have reached unprecedented levels. Failure to find a suitable answer to these threats could, and probably will, result in a substantial deterioration of personal, regional and global security.

Hizbollah is a terrorist organization armed with advanced and sophisticated weaponry, targeting towns and villages in a neighbouring State with the deliberate

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goal of killing as many civilians as possible. It uses local villages as bases of operation and inhabited houses as launching sites, callously exploiting Lebanese civilians by using them as human shields. Hizbollah has proved to be an immediate strategic threat not only to my country but to others as well. The intention of that terrorist organization and of the countries supporting it has been to destabilize the region. Through their actions, they have been responsible for thousands of casualties among innocent people and have brought the region to the brink of full-scale war.

Other terrorist organizations will almost certainly follow suit. They will acquire MANPADS, rockets and sophisticated missiles from States supporting terrorism. They will create new bases inside inhabited areas and will hide weapons in houses and among civilian populations. They, too, will use populations as human shields.

The international community, including civil society, needs to find answers to these threats, rather than merely limiting the right of victims to defend themselves. A special effort should be invested in preventing and banning the transfer of any type of weapons or military equipment to terrorist groups.

A cautious approach should be taken towards arms transactions with States supporting terrorism. Those States should be held accountable for the assistance they have given to the Hizbollah. The full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006), should be a prerequisite for future arms sales to those countries. Failing to properly address the issue of support to terrorism could create a dangerous precedent.

Terrorism puts the stability of the region at risk. Neither confidence-building measures nor new regional security initiatives will be effective without a significant reduction of the level of that threat.

As I mentioned earlier, the second issue which needs strong and decisive action by the international community is the conduct of States developing weapons of mass destruction, in complete disregard for their international obligations. That has been coupled with an aggressive effort to concurrently develop means of delivery. Since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, four significant cases of non-compliance have been formally acknowledged by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Three took place in our region, in States that do not recognize Israel, one of which still calls openly for our elimination. As is clearly documented in the IAEA reports, that same country, Iran, continues, in defiance of the Security Council's resolutions, to develop its nuclear programme and, at the same time, to develop means of medium- and long-range delivery.

For almost four years now, the international community has striven, first, to reveal Iran's true nuclear activities, and later to receive explanations to the findings; when such explanations were not forthcoming, it has sought to bring Iran's clandestine programme to an end. Unfortunately, until now, those efforts have not borne fruit. Moreover, Iran is a source of proliferation for sensitive components of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction programmes. It also openly arms and supports terrorist organizations, first and foremost Hizbollah. Noteworthy is the fact that Iran is assisted in this sponsorship by Syria. Iran's policy dangerously combines a spectrum of threats against which a sober and clearheaded approach must be implemented. Attempts to disregard reality and to delay the implementation of the necessary measures have proven to be the wrong approach.

I have elaborated on the main threats, and it is now my intention to say a few words about what can be done about them. Since those threats are, unfortunately, not new to the international community, many attempts have been made to deal with them. Some measures have been developed by the Security Council, and others appear in different General Assembly programmes and relevant regimes, including the following.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has set as one of its main objectives the prevention of arms transfers to terrorists. It has put in place specific recommendations on how to achieve that goal on the national, regional and global levels.

The First Committee of the General Assembly, this very body, has for the past two years adopted by consensus a resolution calling for the prevention of transfers of man-portable air defence systems to non-State actors.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) requires Member States to put robust export controls in place in

order to prevent the transfer of sensitive weapons technologies to non-State actors. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) establishes recommendations for bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation with a view to fighting international terrorism. Resolution 1695 (2006) on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and resolution 1696 (2006) on Iran establish clear requirements from those two countries in the nuclear realm. Resolution 1559 (2004) calls for the disarmament of all armed militias in South Lebanon. And recently, following the latest conflict, resolution 1701 (2006) prohibits the transfer of any type of weapon to actors other than the lawful Government of Lebanon.

Those are only a few examples of the various resolutions and tools that are the fruit of lengthy negotiations and delicate compromises. Had they been fully implemented, they could have prevented the latest conflict in our region, and they have the potential to prevent future ones as well.

We have the tools. It is our decision, as members of the international community, to see to their implementation. Developing tools and drafting resolutions cannot be a goal in themselves. We all want to see stability in our troubled region. Likewise, we want to guarantee continued global safety and stability. To advance those goals, we need not only to draft resolutions, but, as difficult as it may be, we also need to guarantee implementation of what has been agreed upon.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Madam, may I offer you the congratulations of the Moroccan delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. The Kingdom of Morocco is pleased to see Norway, which has always been devoted to the cause of disarmament, assume chairmanship of the Committee. I assure you of the full support of the Moroccan delegation in your work. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

I should also like to welcome Ambassador Sareva, currently heading the secretariat of the First Committee, and to thank Ambassador Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the excellent work done by his Department.

The Moroccan delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

This year will not see an end to the inevitable failures in the United Nations bodies responsible for disarmament. There is no point in drawing up an exhaustive list of the failures of the past months. They are many and known to all. Even more disturbing is the growing scepticism we sense in civil society with regard to the genuine political will of the States Members of the United Nations to meet the great challenges of disarmament and non-proliferation in the twenty-first century.

It has become customary, in seeking a convincing explanation for the inevitability of failure, to justify it by referring to the obsolete nature of our working methods. It is true that it is sometimes difficult to explain to an outside observer how bodies responsible for matters of such importance to international security can discuss issues of procedure for hours on end — as has occurred in the past — negotiating sometimes secondary matters word by word, losing sight of the essence of their work, and thus eroding the confidence and hope placed in us by civil society. The requirement of obtaining results, although indispensable to any action, does not seem to be an element of our immediate objectives.

That is why it would seem essential, if we are to streamline our working methods and update our negotiating techniques, to raise certain fundamental questions.

What do we want to achieve? What collective goals do we and can we achieve? What is the meaning of collective action? Those and nothing else are the criteria that should determine our working methods. Do we have a common vision and perspective of the world in which we wish to live? If we answer that question in the affirmative, we will see immense potential opening up in terms of modernizing the work of the First Committee. If, however, it should prove impossible to identify common priorities, we will be condemned to perpetuating indefinitely the endless differences of opinion that seem to have characterized our work for so long now.

What, ultimately, are the priorities of a deliberative body of this kind, which is responsible for determining the general approach to be taken by the international community in the coming year in the area of disarmament?

Let us recall a number of obvious truths. First, disarmament and non-proliferation cannot be separated. We cannot make progress in one area while overlooking the other. The second obvious truth is that we should recall the need to rehabilitate the main international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. Let us consider the most significant example in this regard — the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It has become customary to disparage the NPT by highlighting its inadequacies. However, the NPT has made it possible to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and has set basic parameters for the use of nuclear energy for civilian purposes. It has also established essential legal obligations for the nuclear Powers.

If we are to make progress in disarmament, we should not ignore the past but, rather, consolidate our achievements, as reflected in the provisions of the NPT and in the final documents of the Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000. The major international treaties should not be disparaged; they should be strengthened. In this regard, multilateralism is the right approach, because it is by definition inclusive, making possible concrete, tangible action for achieving general and complete disarmament. That is the spirit that animates the claims of the Non-Aligned Movement — of which Morocco is a member — as reflected in the Final Document adopted in Havana on 16 September.

The regional dimension of general and complete disarmament is also fundamental for international security. Of course the right of every State to defend itself and to provide for its own security is recognized by the Charter. But how can we not be alarmed by the fact that — as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has just revealed — military expenditure worldwide in 2006 alone has exceeded $1,060 billion? For the Kingdom of Morocco, the most important issue for the twenty-first century is human development, the dissemination of learning and knowledge and the consolidation of the benefits of democracy. It is therefore shocking to think that in regions that still suffer cruelly from a lack of development projects that would allow for greater regional integration, millions of dollars are being spent on the purchase of military equipment.

The Kingdom of Morocco is deeply committed to the virtues of dialogue, negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. My country is following with interest all initiatives in its immediate neighbourhood that could ensure security in the Mediterranean. These include, on our southern flank, building a united and prosperous Maghreb, in which the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States are respected. In the Middle East, the Palestinian question must be resolved and a Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, must be established. To guarantee lasting peace in the region, it is essential that Israel adhere to the NPT and place its nuclear installations under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

As State party to the NPT, the Kingdom of Morocco has always striven to scrupulously fulfil its obligations. My country has just been elected to the Board of Governors of the IAEA and will pursue its efforts to facilitate agreement on the major questions relating to combating the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

With regard to delivery systems, Morocco has the privilege of chairing the group of States subscribing to The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. In this context, Morocco will spare no effort to explain and promote the objectives of The Hague Code through dialogue — which we hope will be constructive — with the countries that have not yet subscribed to that important international instrument, with a view to achieving its universality.

In addition, and guided by the same concern to reinvigorate all of the bodies responsible for disarmament in the United Nations, my country, which chairs the group of 21 non-aligned and neutral States within the Conference on Disarmament, will work hard to promote dialogue aimed at achieving balanced solutions that will make it possible to break the current deadlock in the work of that body.

The work and the success of this session of the First Committee will be judged in terms of our capacity to meet the expectations of peoples and of civil society with regard to the crucial issue of combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This problem was discussed by the Review Conference in July; it must be addressed urgently and with courage. The traffic in arms, which fuels conflict — particularly on the African continent — is having a catastrophic effect in terms of loss of life. It also has an effect on economic development in the countries concerned and weakens State institutions. The traffic in arms is preventing peoples from enjoying their most fundamental

rights — the right to life and to development. We hope that on such an important issue the First Committee will find answers that respond to the legitimate expectations of the affected people and of civil society as a whole.

Ms. Terrazas Ontiveros (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament and International Security Committee. I should also like congratulate all the members of the Bureau, who are helping you to carry out the important task of guiding our work.

Bolivia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

On 14 December, the calendar will remind us that 60 years have passed since the General Assembly adopted, at its first session in 1946, resolution 41 (I) on the principles governing the general regulation and reduction of armaments, pursuant to Article 11 of the Charter and with a view to strengthening international peace and security in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

However, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continue to be a cause of profound concern for the international community, not only because of the increase in the number of States that possess such weapons, but also because their complex expansion is becoming increasingly hard to prevent. The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons in a state of high alert, their proliferation to unstable regions and the possibility that non-State actors such as terrorist groups seek to acquire nuclear weapons or related materials represent a real threat to all States on every continent and in every region of the world.

We should also recall that in resolution 41 (I) the General Assembly urged all Members of the United Nations to render every possible assistance to the Security Council and to the Atomic Energy Commission in order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and collective security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

What is certain is that over the past six decades the economic gap between rich and poor countries has grown wider and that the increasing threat of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the problem of extreme poverty, remain unresolved.

We wonder why the magnitude of these threats, whose devastating effects are clearly understood by the international community, has not succeeded in convincing everyone of the urgent need to move forward decisively and steadfastly in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Why, despite the risks involved in possessing such weapons, do some seem irresistibly attracted to them?

Bolivia believes that the first step towards complete and general disarmament, which would make it possible to ensure that nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes only, is universal participation in the disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, under an international control and monitoring system and commitments by each State to strictly comply with them.

It is true that global action is not the only way to tackle the threat. Nevertheless, inclusion and participation are crucial if all States are to develop a sense of shared responsibility so as to address the most pressing global problems.

In that respect, the United Nations and the multilateral process, despite the missed opportunities, must continue to play an active and resolute role in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and once again accord the issue of disarmament, along with that of development, priority importance on its agenda.

But there are a few hopeful signs. In its annual report for 2006, the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty states that since August 2005, considerable progress has been made with respect to the establishment of the verification regime of the Treaty and concerning preparations for its entry into force. It also reaffirmed the strong political support that exists for this instrument and gives a very positive assessment of the multilateral efforts made by the international community to achieve its entry into force.

Bolivia joined the CTBT on 24 September 1996 and ratified it in 1999. Currently it is taking part in the International Monitoring System, with two seismological and one infrasound station. It has established a national authority and has created a technical body to serve as coordinator for the National Data Centre.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, zones of peace and denuclearized zones are a way of

achieving nuclear disarmament and is also a reflection of the inherent desire of every human being to enjoy genuine peace and security, to eliminate the scourge of war, and to free up economic, intellectual and other resources so as to devote them primarily to development requirements.

Since 1967, the message of Latin America and the Caribbean that the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons must be achieved has crossed oceans and seas and is increasingly being heard in other continents, regions and subregions. We are pleased to see, along with the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, which established nuclear-weapon-free zones, and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status as a State, the signing last September of the Semipalatinsk Treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

Bolivia will continue to encourage and support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of its own experience as a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and, in line with its pacifist tradition, it will continue to take part in all multilateral initiatives that contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The multifaceted problem of the illicit trade in and the uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as their humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, led my Government to step up its efforts to enact a law regulating the acquisition, registry, possession and carrying of such weapons for civilian and military purposes. We have therefore requested the technical assistance of the Regional Disarmament Centre based in Lima, Peru, on a draft bill on dual-use arms, ammunitions, explosives and chemical agents.

We are continuing to exchange experiences and to address the issue of the question of the illicit trade in small arms in the subregional framework of Mercosur and the Andean community.

Bolivia has also initiated the ratification process of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Bearing in mind the fact that an effective way of revitalizing the General Assembly is to comply with its resolutions and decisions, Bolivia has endeavoured to fulfil the requirements of the resolutions adopted on the recommendation of the Committee within the timelines set.

Lastly, Bolivia deems it a priority to move forward in education on disarmament and on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as on the promotion of a culture of peace, in cooperation with regional and international bodies and civil society groups.

Mrs. Rocca (United States of America): Madam Chairperson, our delegation is very pleased to see the representative of a close friend and ally in the chair. All Member States recognize the leading role that Norway has played in promoting efforts to modernize the United Nations and make it a more effective Organization. We are confident that the Committee will prosper under your direction, and we pledge our support for your endeavours.

Our delegation hopes that the Chairperson and other members of the Bureau, to whom we extend our congratulations, will lead the Member States in securing the endorsement by the General Assembly this year of the agenda clusters that the Committee adopted by consensus in 2004. We believe that their implementation would contribute further to improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of this Committee, as the General Assembly envisioned when it adopted resolutions 58/41 and 59/95 by consensus, which the United States had the honour to sponsor.

In that regard, we take this opportunity to recall for delegations the difficulties that the recent Secretariat practice of presenting programme budget implication statements orally, rather than in written form, has posed for the Member States. All delegations benefit from the ability to make informed and considered decisions on all budgetary matters. Accordingly, our delegation respectfully calls on our colleagues in the Secretariat to ensure that such statements, even when they report no additional spending, are circulated sufficiently in advance to permit delegations to assess them properly. Perhaps the Chairperson and the Bureau could use their good offices to that end.

Governments in future may well view 2006 as a watershed year. After too many years of inaction, the Security Council finally began to address the threats that the nuclear-weapon programmes of Iran and North

Korea pose to the maintenance of international peace and security. Also, the Conference on Disarmament, which has spent most of the past decade on fruitless procedural wrangling, has devoted itself this year to serious substantive discussions — not yet negotiations, but substantive nonetheless — as it seeks to break free of the political linkages that for nearly 10 years have prevented the Conference from carrying out its responsibilities as the principal multilateral negotiating forum for arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament agreements.

What conclusions can we draw from developments in Geneva this year? First, that the Conference on Disarmament does not need to establish subsidiary bodies in order to examine in depth all issues of interest to its Member States, and, secondly, that only one item before the Conference currently is ripe for negotiation, namely, on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Our delegation recalls the words of the Secretary-General when he addressed the Conference on 21 June:

> "It is long overdue for this negotiating body to abandon the all-consuming linkages that have dominated your approach in recent years, and get down to substantive work. I do not discount the difficulty that you face in settling longstanding differences, especially over nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances. Yet those difficulties pale in significance when measured against the immense challenges that the global community faces in the broader sphere on non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control."

The early negotiation by the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off treaty is particularly important because the world community today faces no greater security challenge than the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. In the hands of rogue States or terrorists, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons could inflict massive harm on innocent civilians and on the entire international community. To that end, the United States has taken the lead in offering a treaty that should lead to negotiations.

The United States in recent years has collaborated with like-minded Governments on a series of innovative approaches to deal with non-proliferation. We have drawn on existing institutions, such as the Security Council and its 1540 Committee activities; existing groups of States, such as the Group of Eight and the Global Partnership; and ad hoc coalitions, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative.

The reduction and prevention of the worldwide proliferation threat remain critically important. The United States is committed to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme and similar efforts and devotes significant resources to these programmes, challenging other nations to match our commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United States has contributed more than $1 billion this year towards threat reduction and non-proliferation programmes. Today, some two dozen donors, including the United States, have pledged more than $17 billion towards the Partnership's $20 billion target. The United States also works closely with Russia to secure vulnerable nuclear materials and eliminate excess weapons-grade materials. At the Bratislava summit in 2005, President Bush and President Putin agreed to accelerate those efforts and complete security upgrades by the end of 2008.

Building on those nuclear security efforts, President Bush and President Putin, on 15 July, launched the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Under that Initiative, we seek to build an international coalition of nations committed to cooperate to improve the accounting, control and physical protection of nuclear material and radioactive substances; detect and suppress illicit trafficking; respond to and mitigate the consequences of acts of nuclear terrorism; ensure that States take all possible measures to deny safe haven to terrorists seeking to acquire or use nuclear materials; and strengthen our respective national legal frameworks to ensure the effective prosecution of terrorists and those who facilitate terrorism.

In addition to the nuclear threat, threats from biological and chemical weapons continue to be of concern. The parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have undertaken national efforts to establish and enhance implementation measures, including penal legislation, pathogen security and disease surveillance in cases of alleged use or unusual outbreaks. Similarly, lessons learned from technical assistance visits to the capitals of parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) will be of great value in providing assistance to other Treaty parties.

Such efforts, of course, help the parties to the two Conventions to fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We look forward to agreement during the upcoming BWC Review Conference and Conference of States Parties to the CWC to continue these real-world efforts to curb these growing threats.

Not all the news is good, however. As delegations are aware, the nuclear non-proliferation regime continues to face significant challenges from North Korea and Iran. In both instances, the United States is pursuing multilateral diplomacy, in concert with friends and allies, to address these challenges. Increasing emphasis by the international community on non-proliferation and compliance in multilateral forums and multinational arrangements will, over time, bring about a much-needed paradigm shift in the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The United States is seriously concerned about Tuesday's announcement by the North Korean Government of its intention to undertake a nuclear test. Such an action would be directly contrary to the interests of all of North Korea's neighbours and to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. We will work with Japan, South Korea and all our partners to register our opposition to that provocative announcement.

The United States and its partners in the Six-Party Talks seek the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through peaceful, diplomatic means. We continue to strive for implementation of the September 2005 Joint Statement, which resulted from the Six-Party Talks and which offers North Korea a clear path towards a positive future and concrete benefits in return for carrying out its commitment to denuclearize. We continue to work with our Six-Party partners to bring the North Koreans back to the Talks, most recently offering a Six-Party ministerial meeting in Malaysia to provide the North Koreans with a high-level venue in which to express their concerns.

We call on all five members of the Six-Party Talks and the Security Council — as stated in Security Council resolution 1695 (2006) — to exert every effort to persuade North Korea that the test of a nuclear weapon would only bring about its further isolation and would not be in the interests of the North Korean people.

To our disappointment, North Korea continues to reject these efforts, refuses to carry out its commitment under the September 2005 Joint Statement to denuclearize and has refused for more than 11 months to return to the Six-Party Talks. A North Korean test of a nuclear weapon would severely undermine our confidence in North Korea's commitment to denuclearization and to the Six-Party Talks, and would pose a threat to peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world. A provocative action of that nature would only further isolate the North Korean regime and deny the people of the North the benefits offered to them in the Six-Party Talks, which they so rightly deserve. The United States will continue to work with its allies and partners to discourage such a reckless action and will respond appropriately. We stand firmly with our allies in the region and reaffirm our commitment to their security.

In the case of Iran, on 31 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 1696 (2006). That resolution demands that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and calls upon Iran to take the steps that the Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deemed necessary. The deadline for Iran's compliance was 31 August.

The international community has presented that regime with a choice between two fundamentally different courses. The negative choice is for Tehran to maintain its current course, pursuing nuclear weapons in defiance of its international obligations. If Iran does so, it will face further international isolation and sanctions. Iran's failure to comply with Council resolution 1696 (2006) provides a clear mandate to adopt a Chapter VII sanctions resolution. The Council expressed its intention to pursue measures under Article 41 of the Charter as part of the July resolution. The positive and constructive choice is for the Iranian regime to alter its present course and comply with Council resolution 1696 (2006). That path would yield significant benefits for the Iranian people, including peaceful nuclear energy.

Our delegation takes this opportunity to express the deep disappointment of the United States that the Asian Group, here in New York, designated Iran as a Vice-Chair of the Disarmament Commission last April and that the Middle East and South Asia Group, in Vienna, designated Iran as a Vice-Chair of the General Committee at the IAEA General Conference just last month. Treating Tehran as a member in good standing of the community of nations sends that regime and the international community precisely the wrong message

about Iran's continued disregard for its obligations with regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the IAEA.

This year, the First Committee has the opportunity to use the enhanced mechanisms that delegations put in place in recent years to strengthen the international security dialogue. We all must do our best to set aside our differences and come together to express, as strongly as we can, the determination of the international community to thwart the aims of those who would rend asunder the nuclear non-proliferation regime and thereby undermine our common security. Our delegation looks forward to working with like-minded delegations to achieve that objective.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, I should like to warmly congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. You can be assured of our full availability and cooperation. Our congratulations go also to Ambassador Tanaka, both on his appointment as head of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and on his important statement at the beginning of our work.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States.

It is estimated that in 2006, global military spending will total $1.12 trillion. However, as the Secretary-General noted in his most recent report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1), each year, more than 10 million children die before their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable causes, more than 800 million people suffer from chronic undernourishment and more than 25 million people have died from the affects of HIV/AIDS over the past 25 years. Those figures, which are all-time records, should challenge our individual and collective consciences. For Burkina Faso, they are a serious cause for concern.

Nor can we, unfortunately, find any reason for consolation in the recent developments in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and international security: the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the silence of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) regarding the important issue of weapons of mass destruction, the inability to reach a consensus on the outcome document of this year's Small Arms Review Conference, the terrorist threat that continues to hang over our heads like the sword of Damocles, and the rising tensions linked to the nuclear issue in certain regions of the world. To say the least, the world is certainly not at peace with itself, despite the hopes raised by the end of the cold war.

In these times of uncertainty, a healthy jolt is imperative and urgent, and this jolt should be based upon the foundation of strengthened multilateralism, the primacy of law accepted by all and a climate of mutual trust at the bilateral and global levels. That is why we should recognize and reaffirm that the NPT is and must remain at the heart of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. That is the reason why the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has become a vital necessity. And it is also why the so-called Iranian and Korean peninsula nuclear crises must be resolved through negotiations in a way that respects the rights and interests of the parties and international legality.

While the nuclear threat is in the spotlight today, conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, are no less important. These weapons are an open wound in many regions of the world. They fuel conflict, organized transnational crime and illicit trafficking of all kinds, while sapping the development efforts of the countries concerned. We need to show commitment and determination to eradicate this scourge. And this is the place to note with satisfaction the transformation into a convention of the moratorium on light weapons of the Economic Community of West African States, which strengthens the legal basis for countries in that subregion. The international community should lend its support to that movement.

As a beneficiary of its services since its creation, Burkina Faso would like to bear witness to the importance of the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which is located in Togo. Unfortunately, the Centre is currently going through a period of turbulence because of the inadequate resources made available to it. My country would like to appeal for revitalizing that important instrument for the prevention of conflict and the promotion of peace.

In addition to the many other measures taken in compliance with the relevant conventions to which it is

party, Burkina Faso, in recent years, has strengthened its legal and institutional arsenal in the disarmament sphere. Following the creation of a National Atomic Energy Authority, a High Authority to control the import and use of arms and a National Commission against the proliferation of light weapons, my Government adopted a decree a few months ago that establishes a National Authority for the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Thus, complying with the provisions of the Treaty, of whose beneficial effects Burkina Faso is convinced, my country is making its contribution to efforts to ensure the primacy of international law. We join in the call for a comprehensive convention that would offer guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States, with a view to laying the foundations for a general climate of confidence.

More than ever, we are at a crossroads. We have in our hands the means of leading humanity into a deadlock or opening the door to a safer world for future generations. Let us make the right choice.

Mr. Martínez Flores (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam Chairperson, I would like to begin by expressing our satisfaction over your election to guide the Committee's work during this session. Your guidance will give our debate an element of gender mainstreaming from the perspective of the First Committee. Likewise, we would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to Ambassador Choi of the Republic of Korea for his excellent leadership during the sixtieth session

My delegation would like to express its concern over the stagnation that we see on a number of disarmament-related themes. We are extremely concerned by the lack of agreement this year, in particular in the Review Conference for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. However, we remain confident that, in the short term, the international community will re-focus its efforts to keep these topics alive. We are convinced that multilateralism is, and will continue to be, the way to the maintenance of international peace and security and also to air and find viable solutions to issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in all of their dimensions.

While these themes give rise to concerns at all levels, I would like to draw attention to the concerns of small States that, like mine, tackle these issues only to find that it is enormously complex to find solutions to them.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are sure that that new body will provide solid support, inter alia, to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants during peacekeeping operations. We applaud the European Union vision of including comprehensive measures for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In Central America, the eradication of anti-personnel mines is a task that has not gone away, and to which all affected countries have been committed. But complete eradication requires strengthened comprehensive mine action, which will contribute to the efforts we have already made. It is just as important, or even more important, to devote attention to survivors of anti-personnel landmine accidents.

On issues related to nuclear disarmament, we look forward to the preparatory work for the NPT Review Conference planned for the first half of 2007. We believe that non-proliferation is closely linked to nuclear disarmament, and we hope that as we begin our work we will achieve progress in both areas. In this respect, my delegation would like to express its concern over the announcement made on 3 October by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it will carry out nuclear testing.

To conclude, we join the appeal made by other nations and regional groups that to make progress in these endeavours we need a heavy dose of political will. In that respect, Madam Chairperson, you can certainly count on the full cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. M. Khan (Pakistan): I congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. We are confident that the Committee will achieve optimal results under your able guidance. You can count on our cooperation.

We also convey our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Choi Young-jin for his leadership of the First Committee last year. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Nobuake Tanaka as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and assure him of our full cooperation in promoting the agreed goals of disarmament.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In my statement, I would like to touch on five themes: global security, regional security, Pakistan's strategic posture, South Asia and institutional challenges.

The Charter recognizes security as the right of every State. The Declaration of the first special session on disarmament (see resolution S-10/2) adopted the principle of equal security for all States. A cooperative approach to collective security and a rule-based international order are the best guarantee for viable security. Norms for security, disarmament and non-proliferation should thus be developed, applied and implemented through multilateral institutions. National means or restrictive groups, however powerful they may be, cannot assure international security.

In order to make such norms relevant, we must address the motives that drive States to acquire armaments forcibly. These motives include disputes and conflicts with powerful States, perceived threats from superior conventional and non-conventional forces and discrimination in the application of international law.

Recent developments have revealed that the old consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation has broken down. Pakistan has proposed convening a special conference to bring about a new consensus which responds to current and emerging realities. Such a conference will help promote universal nuclear disarmament under verified international control. This new consensus should revive the commitment of all States to complete nuclear disarmament, establish non-discriminatory standards for peaceful nuclear cooperation, and normalize the relationship between the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime and the three non-NPT nuclear-weapon States. It would also shape an agreed basis for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate international safeguards in accordance with the international obligations of States and on a non-discriminatory basis.

An indispensable first step is the commitment by all nuclear-weapon States to achieve nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time frame and to revalidate the bargain on disarmament and non-proliferation and restore a genuine balance between them.

We support negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate and the five ambassadors' proposal for a universal, non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty.

Until nuclear disarmament is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States should have assurances that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. The security assurances offered by nuclear-weapon States should be translated into a universal, unconditional and legally binding treaty.

We share the majority view that existing international legal instruments are inadequate to prevent the weaponization of outer space. We should consolidate and reinforce this regime and enhance its effectiveness.

We look forward to the 2006 Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention as a means to reinforce the Convention and pave the way for cooperation and exchanges in the field of biosciences.

Efforts should be stepped up to defuse regional tensions and resolve conflicts in the Middle East. Pakistan supports the fulfilment of international obligations by all States and the objective of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The confrontation over Iran's nuclear programme threatens further instability in an already inflamed region. We are encouraged by the negotiations between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany, and believe that this issue can be resolved peacefully in a manner that accommodates the legitimate rights and interests of all parties. Resort to coercion or, worse, the use of force, could lead to grave consequences, regional and global.

The announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding its intention to conduct a nuclear-weapon test is a matter of deep concern. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to desist from introducing nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula, which would be highly destabilizing for the region. This announcement adds urgency to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

The sole purpose of Pakistan's nuclear capability is to deter external aggression. Our strategic posture reflects restraint and responsibility. We maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrence capability.

Pakistan will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We are against a nuclear or conventional arms race in South Asia. Pakistan has taken a series of measures to ensure responsible stewardship of our nuclear programme. Details are given in my written statement.

A stable security environment is important for peace in our region. Pakistan has proposed a strategic restraint regime in South Asia consisting of three elements: conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint, and balance of conventional forces.

Since early 2004, we have pursued a multipronged engagement with India on the basis of confidence-building measures and a composite dialogue. President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in their meeting on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Havana on 16 September, agreed that the peace process must be maintained, as its success was important for both countries and for the future of the entire region. The two leaders decided to continue the joint search for mutually acceptable options for a peaceful negotiated settlement of all issues between India and Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Since 2004, we have held four rounds of consultations with India to develop measures for confidence-building, real-time communication, risk reduction and strategic stability. The two sides have already signed an agreement on pre-notification of flight-testing of ballistic missiles.

Pakistan has a legitimate requirement for nuclear power generation to meet the energy needs of our expanding economy. We will continue to develop nuclear technology for power generation under strict International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. We will not accept discrimination.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is considering new demands for exceptionalism. We trust that the NSG will adopt a non-discriminatory criteria-based approach that will offer equal opportunities for access to civilian nuclear technology.

The preponderant focus on the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) should not divert attention from the need for the regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces. We need to prevent the build-up of conventional weapons and forces, particularly in regions of tension. In South Asia, we need a stable balance of conventional forces to ensure strategic stability between Pakistan and India. There must be restraint both in the demand and in the supply of conventional weapons. Massive introduction of sophisticated weaponry will accentuate conventional asymmetries and compel greater reliance on nuclear and missile deterrence.

This year, the Conference on Disarmament saw heightened activity. The focused and structured debates held by the six Presidents of the Conference resulted in enhanced exchanges of views on the four core issues. We commend the six Presidents for their efforts. The United States of America also submitted draft texts on the mandate of an ad hoc committee and on a fissile material treaty. Despite those developments, the fact is that the Conference has not been able to start negotiations. We must bear in mind that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating, not a deliberative, forum.

Pakistan supports the five ambassadors' proposal, as it presents a package solution to address the four core issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner. It is also supported by a majority of delegations. The agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, stemming from the 10 priorities derived from the first special session on disarmament — the so-called decalogue — and including nuclear disarmament, the fissile materials treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the Nuclear Safety Account, constitutes a delicate equilibrium. Attempts to tinker with this balance have resulted in an impasse.

Two assumptions must be addressed in this context. Those four issues are post-cold-war, twenty-first century, contemporary issues. It is not correct to say that the time is ripe for a fissile material treaty, but not for the other issues. There is sufficient legal, technical and political basis for movement on all four issues. They all qualify on grounds of contemporaneity and ripeness. Of course, when negotiations start, one can imagine a varying degree of progression and a different trajectory for each issue.

Multilateralism is not a simple aggregation of national interests. No such aggregation is possible, given the varied interests of States. Multilateralism is the sum of enlightened self-interests. It entails cooperation and agreement on monitoring, verification and compliance. Let us resolve to pursue genuine multilateralism through this session and beyond.

Mr. Thaung Tun (Myanmar): The delegation of Myanmar congratulates you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee and looks forward to working closely with you to advance the cause of disarmament and arms control. You can rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you discharge your important task.

My delegation joins others in welcoming the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, and wishes him every success.

Myanmar associates itself with the statement made at the 2nd meeting, on 2 October, by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the past year, the international community has continued to give considerable attention to concerns over weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Notwithstanding this attention, there is a glaring lack of tangible results. This casts an ominous shadow over our work.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to conclude a substantive final document. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime for the past 35 years, and lack of progress on implementation of its article VI, particularly in the light of the 2000 agreement on the 13 practical steps, is disappointing. The inability of the 2005 World Summit to agree on texts related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is another setback. It is also regrettable that this year the Conference on Disarmament again failed to adopt a programme of work, and that efforts to establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament were not fruitful. The Disarmament Commission, too, was unable to agree on a substantive agenda to address the two preliminary agenda items pertaining to nuclear and conventional weapons.

The continued existence of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, represents the greatest threat to mankind. In these circumstance, reports that new nuclear weapon systems are being developed and strategic doctrines that lower the threshold for the use of those weapons are being considered are disturbing. Myanmar believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the threat or use of such weapons. Accordingly, during the past decade, Myanmar has been proposing a comprehensive draft resolution calling upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake the step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The disarmament measures undertaken should essentially be irreversible, verifiable and transparent in order to gain the confidence of the international community.

Myanmar will again table a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament at this session. It is my earnest hope that it will continue to receive the valuable support of Member States, as in previous years.

We consider that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we should pursue efforts towards the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. We also believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones established in various regions of the world contribute to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Such a zone was established in our region, South-East Asia, in 1995. We welcome the recent signing in Semipalatinsk by five countries of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is vital for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature. The Treaty now enjoys near-universal support, as 176 countries have signed it and 135 have ratified it. The Declaration adopted at the 2005 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York, and the Third Joint Ministerial Statement of support for the CTBT, issued in New York on 20 September 2006, are positive developments.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is another important concern. The common interests of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes should be recognized. It is therefore encouraging to note that the draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space sponsored by Egypt and Sri Lanka, and the draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities sponsored by the Russian Federation, have the broad support of Member States.

Transparency and confidence-building measures concerning outer space must be promoted in the

interests of maintaining international peace and security. There is a pressing need to negotiate and conclude, as soon as possible, a legally binding instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space. In this regard, we consider that the Conference on Disarmament has a primary role to play.

While keeping our focus on the question of weapons of mass destruction, we cannot afford to ignore the challenge posed by small arms and light weapons. These weapons continue to kill and maim tens of thousands the world over. The first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in June and July, failed to live up to expectations, as agreement could not be reached on a final document. The text that came close to being adopted sought to initiate a new process aimed at giving Governments the ability to keep track of ammunition sales. The need to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects remains urgent.

We are meeting at a time when disarmament forums have yielded scant results. Despite that, we must persevere. In this regard, my delegation shares the Under-Secretary-General's view that "There is too much to lose from the collapse of multilateral efforts in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Failure cannot be accepted as an option."

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations.

Like those delegations that preceded us, we would like to congratulate you very warmly, Madam, on your election to chair the First Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that your vast experience and deep knowledge of the subject matter, as well as Norway's internationally acknowledged leadership role in the area of disarmament and international security, will serve us in good stead in arriving at a successful outcome of our deliberations in this vital sphere of contemporary international relations.

The States members of CARICOM would also like to thank Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory remarks, which provided the Committee with an overview of the stage at which the disarmament and international security agenda stands at the present juncture, and to express appreciation for his views on the direction that States should follow in addressing the many outstanding issues.

The States members of CARICOM fully align themselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We would like, however, to add our own perspective on some relevant aspects engaging the attention of the Committee at present.

The current difficult and complex situation faced by the international community in the field of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is of grave concern to CARICOM member States. On two occasions in the recent past, namely, at the May 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and at the World Summit in September 2005, the international community found it impossible to arrive at a common vision on the steps necessary to advance the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

CARICOM member States are accordingly of the view that greater political will is needed on the part of the nuclear-weapon States in particular to bridge the widening gap and to promote stricter respect for the legal obligations that flow from adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT, resting as it does on the three fundamental and equally important pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, is the principal international legal instrument in this sphere and the linchpin of all multilateral efforts thus far.

In the area of non-proliferation, it will be recalled that the five States possessing nuclear weapons at the time of the signing of that Treaty undertook not to transfer nuclear weapons or technology relating to nuclear explosive devices to other States. Non-nuclear-weapon States for their part agreed not to seek or develop nuclear weapons. In spite of those undertakings, non-nuclear-weapon States continue to face threats by nuclear-weapon States. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community strengthen the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. In this regard, CARICOM member States support the call by

the Non-Aligned Movement for the conclusion as a matter of priority of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. The conclusion of such a legally binding instrument would represent an important confidence-building measure and promote a more stable and peaceful order globally, particularly in those parts of the world where tensions persist with a potential for escalation.

The international community is also concerned by the proliferation threat posed by the prospect of non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the Security Council, in its resolution 1540 (2004), requires all States to enact and enforce effective domestic legal and regulatory controls to, inter alia, prevent the proliferation of such weapons and their means of delivery, including by establishing appropriate controls over related materials. CARICOM member States have not yet all fully implemented Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and accordingly call upon the international community to provide assistance that would enable them to comply fully with their Security Council obligations and be in a position to report adequately to the 1540 Committee.

In this regard, CARICOM member States are hopeful that the regional seminar on implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is scheduled to take place in Lima, Peru, in late November 2006, organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean with financial support from the European Union, will be a useful first step in assisting CARICOM member States in their efforts to comply with these obligations, the central purpose of which is to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists.

There has, however, been one positive development in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. The recent signing by five Central Asian States of a Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is a development that all CARICOM member States, as parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco on the denuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean, welcome most wholeheartedly. We view this as a significant development in the sphere of non-proliferation in the Central Asian region and would urge States in other regions of the globe, particularly in the Middle East, to continue their efforts towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in their respective regions.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, it will be recalled that the preamble and article VI of the NPT call upon the nuclear-weapon States to pursue plans to reduce and liquidate their stockpiles of nuclear weapons and to conclude a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. CARICOM member States share the concern about the slow pace of progress towards complete nuclear disarmament and the total lack of progress on the part of nuclear-weapon States in achieving the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, that notwithstanding the 8 July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice to the effect that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Deep and irreversible cuts in nuclear weapon stockpiles on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons, would, in the opinion of CARICOM member States, strengthen international peace and security and reduce substantially the threats to the very existence of humanity posed by the possession of such weapons of mass destruction.

As concerns the right to the peaceful of use of nuclear technology, the NPT gives every State the inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. CARICOM members would, accordingly, urge all NPT States parties, in exercising this right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, to conclude the broadest possible safeguards agreements with the IAEA, the sole competent authority for verification of compliance with obligations under safeguards agreements.

I wish here to speak to an aspect of disarmament and international security that is never given the attention it deserves, one which is extremely critical to CARICOM: that of the trans-shipment of hazardous materials through the Caribbean Sea. The risk of an accident or, worse yet, a terrorist attack on one of those shipments poses a grave threat not only to our environment and economic and social development but indeed to our very existence in the Caribbean. CARICOM heads of State or Government have consistently called for a total cessation of those shipments in our waters, and we reiterate that call. We also wish to draw attention to the lack of attention paid

to the issue of liability and compensatory mechanisms in the event of an accident and call for this gap in the IAEA regime to be addressed.

It is not only in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation that there has been an absence of meaningful progress. That is also the case in the area of conventional weapons. While some perceptible forward movement has been made recently in addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons, through the adoption by the General Assembly of a politically binding International Instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner (see General Assembly decision 60/519), the international community was unable, at the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held earlier this year, to adopt additional measures to implement further the 2001 Programme of Action.

CARICOM member States are thus deeply disappointed at the inability of the Review Conference to agree on further measures to move this process forward, conscious as they are of the negative impact that illicit trafficking in small arms is having on internal security within the CARICOM subregion. It is also the cause of much suffering, death and destruction in other regions of the globe, particularly in Africa. In this latter respect, CARICOM member States are equally concerned at the unrestrained sale and transfer of conventional weapons. Given the widespread death, destruction and political destabilization caused by small arms and light weapons, CARICOM member States are of the firm opinion that there is an urgent need for strict transfer controls; they would contribute to political stability, peace and security in countries throughout the world.

Substantial progress in achieving nuclear disarmament, in halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons, in putting an end to the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and in controlling those arms, which are the contemporary causes of massive destruction, is essential if all the world's peoples are to pursue their development in peace and security. In our opinion, now is the time to bring nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and conventional arms control more forcefully back to centre stage on the international security agenda, and there is no better place to begin generating the political will necessary for so doing than here and now in the First Committee of the General Assembly.

It is also our hope that in forthcoming meetings of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, both important multilateral forums for negotiating and deliberating, respectively, on issues of disarmament, we can achieve concrete results in the not-too-distant future, having noticed the beginnings of a consensual approach to disarmament issues in those two bodies.

Ms. Charbel (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Madam, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee and to reaffirm that you can count on our cooperation in ensuring the success of our work at this session. Let me say also that we are particularly pleased to see a woman chairing this Committee for the first time.

The functions entrusted to the First Committee are very important because disarmament has great implications for international peace and security, human development and the fight against poverty. That is especially true in the light of the many regional conflicts around the world, in which conventional weapons of all kinds are used; the phenomenon of international terrorism and the risk of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; and the emerging signs of a new arms race.

But the importance of disarmament has not, unfortunately, been matched by concrete results in multilateral, international forums. A survey of the recent past reveals that, in addition to the long-standing lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament, the Review Conference on small arms and light weapons and the 2005 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons were both failures. The current state of disarmament affairs should be an incentive for the Committee to carry out its work in an updated, advanced and effective manner.

My country is situated in a region where conflicts are multiplying and where both conventional and non-conventional weapons are causing many problems that threaten the region and future generations. It is for that reason that we would like to reaffirm our position on a number of disarmament issues.

First, it is very important to continue to address the issue of disarmament in a multilateral context, because arms proliferation affects all countries.

Secondly, the proliferation of nuclear weapons is a danger that should not be ignored. Lebanon supports the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We would like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that Israel is the only country in the Middle East to possess such weapons and not to have acceded to any multilateral instrument to control its nuclear activities.

Thirdly, it is crucial that we deal with the issue of small arms and light weapons, which are used primarily in regional conflicts, in order to exercise effective control over their production, possession, stockpiling, import and export, as well as to monitor their circulation in post-conflict areas and to initiate confidence-building measures regarding them. In that regard, the call for the effective functioning of multilateral mechanisms should not preclude addressing the root causes of conflict, including in particular the issue of foreign occupation. In that connection, I would like to refer to the use against us of internationally prohibited weapons, especially in Israel's recent aggression against our country.

Fourthly, the global problem of landmines — which, as the Secretary-General has said, are silent killers — continues to be a daily concern for Lebanon that has been caused by the previous and current Israeli occupation. That country has to date refused to provide us with maps of these landmines.

Fifthly, we in Lebanon consider development in all its forms, not armament, to be a priority. It is for that reason that last year we reduced our military expenditures to 8.6 per cent of our budget, with 97.2 per cent of this military budget spent on salaries and social services for military personnel.

In conclusion, I hope that this session injects new momentum into the disarmament machinery, serves to promote international peace and security, energizes the work of this Committee and ensures a successful outcome.

Mr. Abdalhaleem (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the Chair of this important Committee, especially given that you come from a country that has made laudable efforts in the resolution of conflict and the restoration of peace and stability in many countries, including my own. I wish you and the other members of the Bureau every success. I also wish to convey my gratitude to your predecessor and to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whom I wish to thank for his comprehensive report to the Committee. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for its efforts to promote international cooperation and multilateral mechanisms in the areas of disarmament and the promotion of international peace and security.

Thanks to the sincere will and determination of its Government and people, the Sudan was able two years ago to put an end to one of the longest conflicts in Africa, following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the south. On 5 May 2006, we also signed the Darfur Peace Agreement. At the moment, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into society of former combatants, which are issues addressed by this Committee, are our priority. Following the restoration of peace and stability, all our efforts are now being devoted to development and reconstruction.

We are meeting today to take up issues pertaining to disarmament and international security, at a time when the world is experiencing many changes in the sphere of weapons, both at the regional and international levels. We believe that the only way to establish international peace is by strengthening multilateral efforts to confront existing dangers, such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, in order to avoid an imbalance of power and discrimination between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Some countries are making unilateral or bilateral efforts to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals. But many major Powers continue to develop nuclear, chemical and biological technologies. There is also competition with regard to testing and the development of advanced technologies, on the pretext that they are being used as deterrents and to strengthen national security. That is taking place despite all the agreements, instruments and protocols that prohibit such practices. As a result, the majority of members would say that how we address disarmament is characterized by selectivity and unfairness. That serves to reinforce doubts as to whether disarmament instruments can be effective. Of course, such effectiveness depends upon the full commitment and

compliance of States parties to those instruments without discrimination. It does not depend upon the number of treaties or the number of signatories to them.

It is all the more worrisome to note that many regions and countries are experiencing war, conflicts and tensions, and that military expenditures are rising. At the same time, we note that the budget resources devoted to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other urgent matters such as poverty, natural disasters, the environment and sustainable development continue to decrease. That leads to greater inequality and imbalance. We would therefore like to point out the need for the nuclear Powers to take swift and serious measures to reduce their spending on armament programmes as a preliminary step towards the phased elimination of their strategic nuclear arsenals. We also support measures designed to establish binding international instruments that would offer countries lacking such capacities necessary guarantees against all threats from countries that possess such technologies, without prejudice to the right of any State to use nuclear technology for peaceful scientific purposes in the service of humanity and world development, not in the service of the war machine and destruction.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, there is broad recognition of the need to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. That, in our opinion, is the most expeditious way to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and to contribute to the strengthening of regional and international peace and security. Security, as we all know, is an indivisible whole.

Many countries, it is true, have joined treaties creating nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such zones now cover about 50 per cent of the surface of the Earth. However, there are other inflamed areas of the globe that should be declared nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular the Middle East. We would have been able to achieve that objective, if Israel had not refused to submit its nuclear programmes to a comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime. This truly represents a threat to peace and stability, not only in that inflamed region, but throughout the world.

The Sudan is a genuine partner in international efforts to achieve disarmament. We were among the first to join a number of relevant international conventions and other instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we signed after the Vienna workshop on the activities of the CTBT Organization.

Our capital, Khartoum, hosted the first meeting of national African bodies on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The conference yielded very important recommendations relating to the declaration of Africa as a chemical-weapon-free zone. We also stressed that the activities of countries in this area should relate to peaceful uses only.

The Sudan has also made an effective contribution to the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We have participated in regional workshops held in Jordan, Cairo, Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Algeria, as well as conferences held in New York on that subject. We participate because we are convinced that multilateral action, both regional and international, is the best way to ensure the universality and the implementation of conventions and treaties.

An absolute disarmament priority for the Sudan is the issue of small arms and light weapons. We and many other countries suffer from this scourge. We realize that it has tribal, economic and cultural dimensions: these weapons form part of a ritual and a show of force among certain groups. The phenomenon is therefore very difficult to control, but the Sudan, which realizes the danger, is determined to confront it resolutely.

We have thus been making efforts regionally and internationally to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are also convinced that there is an interrelationship between that phenomenon and other illicit activities, such as transnational organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. For these reasons, we are involved in a number of initiatives through the African Union and the League of Arab States, the IGAD, the Sahel countries, and in bilateral efforts with neighbouring countries in order to demarcate borders and control customs posts and checkpoints.

We support these efforts and insist that manufacturing countries must support the fight against the proliferation of these weapons. We also insist that these weapons should not be supplied to non-State

actors. Support, including technical support, should be given to countries in transition from conflict to peace.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): Let me first congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the Committee. I would like to extend my congratulations to the entire Bureau, as well as my thanks to last year's chairman, Ambassador Choi.

San Marino and many other Member States are disappointed at the failure to produce positive results at the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. San Marino, like many other small and medium-sized countries, relies mainly on international agreements for our protection. In fact, the United Nations, and the First Committee in particular, represents our first line of defence. We collectively face deadly challenges, such as the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, the legal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction technology and some Governments' lack of compliance with or defiance of existing treaties and resolutions. This year, it is imperative to re-energize the First Committee and to find together practical measures to achieve global security.

As a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), San Marino welcomes Viet Nam's ratification and urges the few remaining countries to ratify that very important treaty. The legacy of the First Committee at its sixty-first session should be the achievement of fair and positive solutions to disarmament and to all the other troubling issues that threaten the very survival of the human race.

Mr. Al-Najjar (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. We are fully confident that your wise leadership will enable us to achieve the positive results that we seek. I wish you and the other members of the Bureau every success in your work. I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his comprehensive statement earlier in the general debate.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The international community possesses agreed priorities in the area of disarmament. During the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, it was decided that disarmament efforts must focus on nuclear weapons first, then on other weapons of mass destruction, followed by conventional weapons, to attain the ultimate objective set out in the Charter of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security. However, the main characteristics of multilateral efforts related to the three priorities have been inaction and a lack of progress. Notwithstanding the progress — albeit limited progress — that has been made, we find that treaties have lost their value and that their prestige has been weakened through non-compliance with their provisions. This is exacerbated by the silence and disregard of the international community and the policy of double standards, which has impeded the work of most disarmament mechanisms, including the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, which suffer from paralysis. None of this is cause for optimism.

Last year, unfortunately, we witnessed the failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), aimed at reaffirming the agreements reached in 1995 — which made possible the unlimited extension of the Treaty — and in 2000. Despite all that, my delegation believes that the limited success should not discourage us. Rather, it should encourage us to intensify our work and to make a constructive contribution in order to overcome the obstacles and shortcomings. Here, I reaffirm my Government's willingness to continue its regional and international efforts to that end, within the framework of its firm ongoing policy aimed at strengthening the principles of disarmament with regard to all weapons of mass destruction.

The Government of Saudi Arabia has reaffirmed its commitment to that approach by joining a number of major treaties and conventions. We were among the first countries to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Biological Weapons Convention, the NPT and a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a small quantities protocol. We are continuing our

cooperation with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) by submitting reports on implementation of the resolution and information about new and existing laws, including, most recently, the national disarmament regime adopted by the Saudi Council of Ministers on 28 November 2005.

Saudi Arabia has made every effort to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by establishing appropriate governmental structures and bodies and by enacting many regulations and laws, as recently reflected in my Government's 30 August 2005 adoption of a system regarding weapons and munitions. These are detailed in the report submitted to the Department for Disarmament Affairs in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to fight that illicit trade.

In that context, my delegation would like to emphasize the need to respect the Programme of Action as an important tool to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We regret the failure of the June 2006 Review Conference, which, after all our efforts, failed to reach consensus on an outcome document that reflected our hope that we could combat that grave phenomenon.

The lack of progress in efforts to declare the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone is due primarily to Israel's refusal to join the NPT and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. Israel is the only country in the region that has not taken that step, despite international pressure aimed at declaring the region, including the Arabian Gulf, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. This policy of double standards is a source of great concern for the countries and peoples of the region.

While we support the right of all countries to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including the right to obtain nuclear expertise and technology, we call on all countries to follow the path of negotiation to peacefully settle the Iranian nuclear issue, in particular because Iran has always stated that its programme is intended for peaceful purposes.

Today, the world faces great threats and challenges, which impose heavy responsibilities upon the Organization in its duty to maintain international peace and security. We hope that our approach to our work will be characterized by the requisite objectivity, seriousness and vision and that we will be able to meet those challenges and responsibilities and fulfil the aspirations of all.

Ms. McNish (Jamaica): I join others in congratulating you, Madam Chairperson, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of Jamaica's support during the work of the Committee. I would also like to welcome Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to thank him for his overview of the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The delegation of Jamaica fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be priority areas on the international peace and security agenda as we continue to face a complex security environment. While there have been some achievements, there is, quite understandably, disappointment at the setbacks experienced in multilateral disarmament efforts. The situation remains a challenging one, casting doubts on the will of the international community to move decisively to promote disarmament and prevent proliferation.

The twin failures of the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the absence of any reference to nuclear disarmament or non-proliferation in the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) point glaringly to the huge gap between rhetoric and practical steps to achieve genuine progress in the strengthening of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Jamaica reaffirms that it considers the NPT to be the bedrock of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. We are extremely concerned, therefore, that recent developments only serve to undermine the Treaty. In that regard, Jamaica believes that urgent and firm steps must be taken to address the challenges and threats to the integrity of and confidence in the Treaty, including, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General on nuclear disarmament, achieving further irreversible cuts in nuclear arsenals, ensuring more effective compliance measures, and reducing the threat of proliferation not only to States, but also to

non-State actors. In other words, the approach to disarmament must be based on the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verification.

In the final analysis, however, Jamaica remains convinced that it is only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that international peace and security can be guaranteed. We make no distinction between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we urge nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under article VI of the NPT.

By the same token, while underscoring the right of all States to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with article IV of the NPT, we insist that this right must be accompanied by the commitment and obligation to comply with the verification and safeguards provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Jamaica maintains that the IAEA has a critical role to play in reducing the threats posed to international peace and security.

We reiterate the importance of the universality of the Treaty and call on the three States currently outside the NPT framework to accede to the Treaty and place their facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

A practical step in building confidence in the non-proliferation regime is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean under the Treaty of Tlatelolco has served us well in that region and we believe should be replicated in other regions. We therefore welcome the recent establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and support calls for the establishment of a similar zone in the Middle East. That will go a long way towards reducing tensions in that region.

In tandem with the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) constitutes a major plank in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We welcome the recent ratification by Viet Nam of the CTBT, bringing us closer to the entry into force of the Treaty. The success of the Treaty depends on its universality and verifiability. In that context, and as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT, we urge ratification, particularly by annex 2 countries, to ensure its entry into force.

Jamaica is disturbed by the stated intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to carry out nuclear testing. We urge that country to refrain from such action and to respect the current moratorium on nuclear testing.

We welcome the opportunity provided by the recent session of the Disarmament Commission to engage in meaningful deliberation on the way forward and in establishing, promoting and elaborating global norms on disarmament. Jamaica also notes recent proposals by nuclear States to prevent the weaponization of outer space and to commence preliminary work on a legal instrument for halting the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. We believe that this trend could provide the catalyst for renewed confidence in the disarmament machinery.

Even as the international community is rightly focusing attention on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, that should not divert attention from the issue of conventional weapons. Without minimizing the importance of efforts in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation field, as others have noted, small arms and light weapons kill and maim thousands of people daily and exacerbate tension in zones of conflict, particularly in Africa.

Jamaica does not manufacture arms, yet easy access to illegal weapons and ammunitions and the subsequent high levels of gun violence place an unwarranted burden on our social and economic system. When the Government is forced to devote a significant proportion of the national budget to tackling crime and violence, there can be no question about the linkage between disarmament and development.

As a country that is directly affected by illicit trafficking in small arms and ammunition, Jamaica was therefore deeply disappointed at the failure of the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Jamaica and other countries of the Caribbean Community participated actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the regional meeting held in Antigua, Guatemala, which adopted a declaration containing elements pertinent to our region. We had looked forward to building on the 2001 Programme of Action.

But we should not allow the inability of the Conference to advance implementation of the Programme of Action to compromise efforts to prevent

the continued illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. It is in that context that we reiterate our support for decision 60/519, adopted by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, which established the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

More must, however, be done to properly address that problem. It is our view that international efforts should be geared towards adopting a legally binding instrument on markings and tracings for small arms and light weapons. Governments, including those in manufacturing countries, have a responsibility to ensure that weapons and ammunition, where legally acquired, are not diverted to criminals to fuel transnational crime or to arm terrorist groups. Proper checks and balances, including transfer controls, would ensure the legitimacy of the legal trade and in that way local and international law enforcement agencies would be in a better position to trace illegally acquired weapons.

In the Caribbean, concerted efforts are being made at the national and community levels to curb the proliferation of illicit small arms and ammunitions. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation and initiatives are, however, crucial if we are to make any meaningful headway in fighting those phenomena. In that context, we acknowledge the initiatives of the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in the area of coordinating action on small arms. We are also supportive of efforts aimed at concluding an arms trade treaty.

In conclusion, Jamaica shares the view that we must continually reinforce the importance of multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues, including small arms and light weapons. Through the strengthening of the multilateral framework, we can achieve our common disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

Mr. Maema (Lesotho): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) – Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country, Lesotho.

At the outset, SADC wishes to congratulate you, Madam, and other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of the First Committee at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. We are confident that, with your rich experience and able leadership, you will guide us to a successful conclusion of our work. The States members of SADC assure you of their fullest support and cooperation.

SADC aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States. However, the SADC intervention will focus only on some specific areas that are pertinent to our Community.

One of the greatest challenges that SADC has been faced with since its inception is the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, a menace that continues to endanger the socio-economic and political stability of States in our subregion. Our Governments recognize that a scourge of such magnitude can be combated only through a concerted effort at the multilateral level. Hence, in August 1995, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO) was created to tackle cross-border criminal activity, including the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. One of the top priorities of SARPCCO continues to be the combating of trafficking in firearms.

SADC supports all efforts at various levels aimed at combating trafficking in illicit small arms and light weapons. It was therefore befitting for SADC member States to participate very actively, as they did, in the preparations for and at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Indeed, immediately following the Conference, in August 2001 the SADC member States adopted the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region. The Protocol aimed at creating national and regional controls over trafficking and possession of small arms and light weapons. It seeks to address problems related to the illicit manufacturing of firearms and ammunition and their accumulation, trafficking, possession and use in the region. The

implementation of the Protocol is a priority for all SADC member States, and several initiatives, including the convening of conferences, have been undertaken by member States to jumpstart the implementation of the Protocol.

Regarding the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, SADC member States have taken several measures at the national level, which include the establishment of focal points to coordinate their work on small arms and light weapons issues, the development of new or the review of relevant legislation, and the destruction of surplus and/or obsolete arms and weapons.

It may be timely to mention at this juncture that SADC had envisaged an outcome of the 2006 Review Conference that would chart the way forward vis-à-vis the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Hence, while SADC is confident that the Review Conference was successful in recalling the issue of small arms and light weapons to the attention of the international community, the Community was disheartened by the failure of the Conference to adopt an outcome document.

It is common knowledge that Africa is the most heavily mined continent and also that one of the most critical factors impeding economic recovery in the continent is the infestation by landmines of millions of acres of land that cannot be developed. The havoc and devastation caused by landmines, particularly in some SADC countries, is well known and has been well documented.

SADC is therefore fully behind all efforts initiated by the United Nations, the African Union and other stakeholders aimed at the full implementation and universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. All members of SADC are parties to the Mine Ban Treaty. They are committed to achieving the goal of creating a southern Africa and, ultimately, a world that are free from landmines. The implementation of the Treaty is therefore an obligation that SADC member States take very seriously. Indeed, some SADC member States have completed their domestic legislation to implement the Treaty, while others are in the process of enacting or amending relevant legislation to implement it.

Some SADC member States have destroyed their anti-personnel landmine stockpiles; others are still grappling with the difficult and costly task of demining. However, due to a strong commitment in our subregion to ensuring human security and to meeting the 10-year deadline for the removal of emplaced mines, member States are diverting their meagre resources to attain that noble goal. SADC therefore urges countries that are not yet parties to the Mine Ban Treaty to embrace a ban on anti-personnel landmines and to seriously consider becoming parties to the Treaty.

SADC wishes to join previous speakers who have expressed profound regret over the impasse that has lately befallen the United Nations disarmament machinery. Also regretted are the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to produce a substantive consensus outcome document, as well as the absence of a section on disarmament and non-proliferation in the 2005 Summit Outcome Document. SADC believes that the decisions taken at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and agreements made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference should form the blueprint for nuclear disarmament.

The ongoing concerted efforts to combat terrorism should be coupled with genuine efforts towards the implementation of the NPT, particularly its article VI. The three pillars of the Treaty — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy — should enjoy balanced consideration within the framework of the entire disarmament machinery. SADC therefore commends Brazil on its initiative of calling for the convening of the preparatory process for the next review conference of the parties to the NPT. In the meantime, we wish to call upon those States Members of the United Nations that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to consider becoming parties to it in order to enable its early entry into force.

SADC shares the view that there is a strong connection between disarmament and development and that, furthermore, no socio-economic development can be achieved without peace, security and political

stability. In our view, if United Nations Member States could gather the necessary political will to overcome their differences as they approach important deliberations on issues relating to disarmament, the dreams of many nations for a peaceful and prosperous world would be fulfilled.

Mr. Navoti (Fiji): We are pleased to see you presiding over the First Committee, Madam. Your being the first woman to do so in the 61-year history of this Committee is indeed historic. Your election and stated desire to continue the improvement of our working methods gives my delegation optimism amidst the grim record of our achievements in the recent past. We congratulate you and the members of your Bureau on your election and assure you of Fiji's full support in the work of this Committee at this session.

Fiji is convinced that, given our size, geographical location and ability to influence global affairs, there is no more effective way than multilateralism to bring States together, keep the peace, protect human rights, promote sustainable development and build negotiated solutions to common problems. It is through that conviction that we find the valour to contribute to this debate and to tell the world that what is of concern to the mighty and powerful has bearing and effect on and is also of real concern to the weak and isolated.

This Committee opens its sixty-first session against the backdrop of heightened international concern over the expansion of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Fiji laments the fact that large stocks of nuclear weapons continue to exist and that some are still keen to develop even more sophisticated and greater arsenals of such weapons. The expansion of vertical proliferation to include countries other than the five traditional nuclear-weapon States and the persistent danger of horizontal proliferation are made worse by the real threat of having those weapons fall into the hands of non-State actors.

Fiji and other countries in our region enjoy a cordial and satisfactory relationship with our dialogue partners so far as the implementation and observance of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty are concerned. We can only encourage the replication of such an arrangement to other zones and therefore welcome initiatives of the Central Asian States towards that end.

Fiji supports all efforts to safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We encourage dialogue and believe that opportunities for diplomatic avenues within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the United Nations Charter ought to be exhaustively taken advantaged of. We look forward to the commencement of the next NPT review process and express our confidence that, through lessons learnt, measurable and substantive progress will be achieved.

It is always important to recall the devastating effects of nuclear-weapons testing on human health and the environment. Equally crucial is the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in preventing such damage in the future. Despite overwhelming international support for the CTBT and the many ways it contributes to our security, Fiji, like others, mourns the fact that, without the signatures and ratification of those key States that are required by article XIV to effect entry into force of the CTBT, no real certainty can be realized in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Incidentally, 2006 marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT. Fiji notes and warmly welcomes the ratification of the CTBT earlier this year by our Asian Group neighbour Viet Nam, and encourages others to follow suit.

It is widely accepted that small arms may not have the same terrible cataclysmic potential as weapons of mass destruction; nonetheless, it has been proven that they are responsible for the overwhelming number of lives lost around the globe and have quite simply become everyday weapons of mass destruction. Fiji continues to be gravely concerned about the accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world, including the Pacific. We have our own regrettable story regarding the costs of their misuse, and we therefore welcome all efforts being undertaken at both the regional and subregional levels, as well as in this multilateral forum, to curb the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons.

Our failure to agree on an outcome document at the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit

Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July, lamentable as it was, must not deter our collective resolve to continue our common fight to comprehensively address the nature of the small arms problem in all its aspects. Fiji commends and lends its support to efforts aimed at promoting wider understanding between States on the need for global guidelines for transfer controls of small arms and light weapons. The document we collectively negotiated at the Review Conference remains, in our assessment, the only United Nations document which contains a complete catalogue of such measures.

Much remains to be achieved in the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. This Committee was sourly reminded on Monday by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs of nine major setbacks of the past year. Though there have been a number of modest achievements, the lack of progress does certainly reflect the current environment facing disarmament issues. Fiji is among those who choose to remain optimistic about the future. We invite the major players in this field to demonstrate their political will to move forward. Security is our collective responsibility.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): My delegation congratulates you, Madam, on your election and assures you and your colleagues on the Bureau of our full support.

At one level, the summer of 2006 appears to have been discouraging, with conflicts, destruction and loss of life. The small arms Conference failed to produce any tangible result. World stocks of almost 27,000 nuclear weapons remain alarmingly high. World military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion for the second consecutive year.

But at another level, a stirring in human consciousness is taking place that would suggest that war does not work. Military force does not bring the expected improvement for the common good. Recent wars have unleashed forces that continue to corrode civilizations and the consequent human suffering is inexcusable in an age that possesses the mechanisms for negotiation, mediation, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Despite the present gloom, positive features can be discerned in the broader field of security, as noted in the report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission. The number of inter-State conflicts has been declining. Peacekeeping operations prevent shooting wars in many places. The Peacebuilding Commission is readying itself to assist States emerging from conflict, thus reducing the risk of their relapse into violence.

This Committee, in its turn, should help the international community to seek the benefits of an increasingly interdependent world. Dialogue is necessary to reach that goal, and much better dialogue is needed in the disarmament forums of the United Nations. That is because, at present, the debate seems to remain sterile. If the human dimension that underlies the subject of small arms were emphasized, perhaps a much-needed arms trade treaty could be achieved. The $4-billion annual trade in small arms is not yet subject to a comprehensive global agreement. Instead, there is a patchwork of national export laws, which unscrupulous arms dealers can circumvent. Six hundred and forty million of those weapons in the world today kill and maim tens of thousands, spark refugee crises, undermine the rule of law, and spawn a culture of violence and impunity.

That is the human side of the small arms debate, which has a deep impact also on children. Surely, focusing on the huge numbers of those who suffer from the illicit spread of small arms should impel us to achieve an arms trade treaty.

The Holy See takes this opportunity to appeal again to the international community to establish a binding legal framework aimed at regulating the trade in conventional weapons of any type, as well as the know-how and technology for their production. In that regard, my delegation supports the draft resolution aimed at establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms as a step towards a comprehensive, internationally binding instrument on that issue. Moreover, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms needs stronger support. More transparency in arms is necessary if we are to advance confidence-building measures.

Dialogue must also be advanced in the area of nuclear weapons. The urgency of that increases daily. Recently, the Secretary-General said that the world had reached a crossroads in this regard. One path can take us to a world in which the proliferation of nuclear weapons is restricted and reversed through trust, dialogue and negotiated agreement. The other path

leads to a world in which rapidly growing numbers of States feel obliged to arm themselves with nuclear weapons, and the threat of nuclear terrorism grows.

My delegation agrees that the international community seems almost to be sleepwalking down the latter path, not by conscious choice but rather through miscalculation, sterile debate and the paralysis of multilateral mechanisms for confidence-building and conflict resolution.

That is a strong indictment that should urge all interested parties to make clear commitments to implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty, to legalize the negative security assurances, and to take nuclear weapons off high-alert status. Those steps are valuable in and of themselves. They would also decrease the risks of use, diminish the access of terrorists to catastrophic weapons, and generate support for strengthening non-proliferation.

The Holy See has spoken often on this subject, asking that those Governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them, agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. Policies of nuclear deterrence, typical of the cold war, can and must be replaced by concrete measures of disarmament based on dialogue and multilateral negotiations.

The Chairman: That completes the list of speakers for this morning.

I have been informed that several delegations wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind all delegations that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes.

I now call on those delegations that wish to speak in exercise of the rules of procedure.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today, the First Committee heard a number of unsubstantiated allegations about my country from the representative of the Israeli regime — a regime that is based on violence, occupation, State terrorism and bloodshed.

It is an open secret that Israel has continuously and purposely violated many international laws and norms, not to mention dozens of United Nations resolutions, to which the response of that illegitimate and irresponsible regime has been nothing but complete defiance. In that context, particular reference can be made to the mischievous policy of the Israeli regime on nuclear issues, which is a showcase of its concealment and unabated pursuit of a nuclear arsenal in recent decades, with the support of the United States.

It is indisputable that this ill-intentioned policy has threatened peace and security in the volatile region of the Middle East for years. In fact, Israel's nuclear threat and missile capability, coupled with its behaviour, present a real menace not only to regional peace and security, but also to the whole world.

Therefore, that threat needs to be urgently and decisively addressed by the international community. Indeed, that regime should face a united front and must be kept under continuous pressure to relinquish its nuclear weapons. As demanded by the non-aligned member States earlier in this Committee, Israel should accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and place all its nuclear facilities under international monitoring.

It is worth mentioning that the only existing obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the non-adherence of that regime to the NPT and its continued clandestine operation of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, with help and technological support and assistance from the United States. That regime has paid no attention to the constant international calls in various forums, particularly the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which called upon the regime by name to accede to the NPT immediately and without conditions. Moreover, the said regime has never been a party to the international instruments on weapons of mass destruction: the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the NPT.

In our view, the baseless allegations and the statement of the representative of the Zionist regime in this Committee today indicate that those who are putting my country under growing, unreasonable and unfair pressure are in fact trying to serve the interests of the illegitimate Israeli regime. We also believe that

the international community is well aware of that ploy and therefore will not give in to the pressure designed to safeguard the illegal policies and practices of the Zionist regime and its illegitimate interests.

The election of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the vice-chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to the General Committee of the International Atomic Energy Agency Conference, as well as the statement issued by 118 heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement, are clear indications of that. Hence, may that delegation, which is deeply disappointed by the elections, continue to be disappointed.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation will have ample time to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau as well.

I have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply at this stage in order to respond to the representative of Israel, who invoked my country in his statement before the Committee.

As all members of the Committee know, for several decades now the First Committee has considered the threat posed by Israeli nuclear weapons. Over the years, a draft resolution has traditionally been submitted on that issue at every session. The question of Israeli nuclear weapons and the threat they pose to the countries of the region as a whole is submitted every year before the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. It is clear that the only danger to international peace and security and the countries of the region is that of Israeli nuclear weapons. In that context, we recall Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which addressed that issue and asserted that Israel's nuclear capacities were a danger to the region. The resolution called for the elimination of that threat.

With the assistance of major Powers — which I need not name here because we all know who they are — Israel has been able to build eight nuclear reactors for exclusively military purposes on a land-surface area of approximately 20,000 square kilometres. Israel thereby poses a threat to all the countries of the region, including itself. The truth is clear and precise, and speaks for itself. It requires no verbal manipulations.

The international community is concerned by Israel's nuclear arsenal. Some would even assert that its nuclear capacities exceed those of France, the United Kingdom and China combined. We are not speaking here of poetry or literature. We are repeating facts that are a matter of great concern to the international community in general and to us in particular. In seeking to muddy the waters and to broach issues that are quite irrelevant to matters of disarmament and international security, the representative of Israel tried to divert attention from the great danger posed by Israel and which is an issue of concern to us all.

With the assistance of certain countries, Israel is currently attempting to exploit outer space for military purposes and using nuclear energy to that end, thereby extending its threat into outer space, no longer content to confine itself to the Earth. That is why I invite the members of the First Committee to take those issues into consideration as they listen to the Israeli allegations which have no basis in reality and confirm only Israel's failure to comply with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations on disarmament and, in particular, weapons of mass destruction; with the resolutions of the IAEA; and with resolutions of the Security Council. Israel thereby stands accused of violating international law and of marginalizing itself on matters of disarmament and international security.

Programme of work

The Chairman: Allow me to remind all delegations again that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions under all disarmament and international security agenda items is next Wednesday, 11 October, at 6 p.m. Delegations are strongly urged to submit their draft resolutions by that deadline in order to enable the Secretariat to make them available as official documents to the Committee as soon as possible. I assume that all delegations took advantage of the kits that have been prepared by the Secretariat. That will certainly help to speed up the processing of draft resolutions and decisions.

In connection with the preparation for the second phase of the Committee's work, namely the thematic discussion on item subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions, an indicative timetable was circulated to the Committee during last week's organizational meeting in the form of document A/C.1/61/CRP.2. However, due to some minor corrections of a technical nature to that document, it

has been revised and circulated to all delegations this morning as document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.1.

In preparing the revised indicative timetable, I have followed the practice already established by the Committee at its previous sessions. After we complete our general debate, hopefully by the end of the morning meeting on Monday, 9 October, I would like to propose that we carry out our discussions for the second phase of the Committee's work in the following manner.

First, during the first week of the thematic discussions, the meeting on the afternoon of Monday, 9 October, will be dedicated to an informal exchange with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of the respective organizations. As indicated in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.1, we will also have as guest speakers the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. However, the participation of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency or his representative still needs to be confirmed.

Second, the two meetings on Tuesday morning and afternoon, 10 October, will be dedicated to the issue of nuclear weapons.

Third, the meeting on Wednesday, 11 October, will be devoted to other weapons of mass destruction and outer space (disarmament aspects). We will have a guest speaker, the President-designate of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

Fourth, on Thursday, 12, and Friday, 13 October, both meetings will be dedicated to the issue of conventional weapons. We will also have as guest speakers the President of the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, and the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms on Thursday; and the President-designate of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects on Friday.

Fifth, starting on the second week of the thematic discussions, at the morning meeting of Monday, 16 October, we will first have a panel discussion of independent experts with Mr. Hans Blix, Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission. We will then discuss other disarmament and international security issues. In that connection, we will also have an exchange with the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on Verification.

Sixth, on Tuesday, 17 October, we will discuss regional disarmament and security. The Committee will have an interactive exchange with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and the three Directors of the United Nations Regional Centres during the meeting.

Seventh, on Wednesday, 18 October, the Committee will discuss the issue of disarmament machinery. The President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research will be guest speakers. We will also have the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past sessions and the presentation of reports with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Eighth, on Thursday, 19 October, the representatives of four non-governmental organizations will provide the Committee with presentations on the subject of nuclear issues and small arms and light weapons.

As seen in the note at the bottom of document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.1, it is my intention to divide the nine formal meetings into three segments so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive discussions, as well as introducing all the draft resolutions in an efficient and timely manner. The first segment will start with a guest speaker for some meetings, as indicated in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.1.

After the speaker makes his or her opening statement, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so that we can have an informal question-and-answer

session with that guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second segment, which will consist of interventions by delegations on the specific subject under consideration. The third and last segment, which is also formal, will be to allow time for the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions.

I would also like to mention that, at the last meeting of that second stage of our work, which I left on reserve for Friday, 20 October, delegations will still be able to introduce remaining draft resolutions, if needed. That will certainly enable the Committee to have sufficient time during the action phase of its work. Therefore, I strongly urge all delegations to do their utmost to introduce their draft resolutions during the upcoming second phase of the Committee's work. The Committee could also use that last meeting for discussions on issues that require additional time.

I would also like to add that if there is sufficient time left after the Committee concludes its thematic discussion of a specific subject and the introduction of draft resolutions for any given meeting, we could continue our discussions by moving to the next thematic subject on our timetable. Therefore, following the concept of the rolling list of speakers we now have for the general debate, I appeal to all delegations to be always prepared to discuss the next thematic subject, if necessary.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): If it is the wish of the Committee to change the format of the meeting, we can certainly go along with that. I would just like to seek clarification concerning the reason that we changed those segments referred to from informal to formal. Given the fact that the proceedings of the First Committee should be recorded, our understanding was that we decided last year to make the change to informal in order to ease the burden of verbatim records for the proceedings of the Committee. I would like to know the main reason for changing those informal segments to formal.

The Chairman: As I said, the reason we made this technical change was that we wanted to have it identical to last year's proceedings. This is exactly the way it was done last year. There was kind of a technical error in the Chairman's note, so I wished to make it clear that the proceedings will be exactly the same as was agreed last year.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): With reference to document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.1, we agree that the intention is to have the practice proceed along the same line as was taken last year, but I have to confess that I am not sure that this is exactly the same as last year's. Since I do not have the document with me here, I would like to return to this matter once we check last year's documents in terms of how we partitioned the session. My recollection is a little bit different, but I would not want to venture into that now, since I do not have last year's work programme document.

The Chairman: The Secretariat has sought to be sure that it is exactly the same and it is my understanding, at least, that it is the same.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): We did go to the verbatim records from last year and representatives are, of course, invited to go back and check those records. It would appear that what the Chairperson has elaborated would best reflect last year's proceedings, as reflected in the verbatim records, but certainly delegations are invited to check the records themselves in order to have full confidence.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): In agreeing with what my colleague from Egypt has said, my delegation, too, has a recollection that is slightly different from what has been conveyed in the document that has been circulated. Could we request that we defer a decision on the document to a later stage, when we will have checked the record, and that we return to this matter later?

The Chairman: Absolutely. I think we will come back to making a decision on this matter tomorrow. In the meantime, as the Secretary said, representatives are all free to check their records.

Let me also inform members that there will be no formal list of speakers for the upcoming second phase of our work. Nonetheless, I would encourage delegations to inform the Secretariat of their plans to speak prior to the start of the meetings. If they do not, all requests for interventions will be taken directly from the floor on the given day.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.6

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee

6th meeting

Friday, 6 October 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: We again have a long list of speakers this morning. Therefore, I kindly request that delegates respect the agreed time limit for their statements.

Mr. Subedi (Nepal): I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your unanimous election as Chairperson of the Committee. I extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The world currently spends approximately $850 billion on annual military expenditures. The available statistics clearly support the argument that the resources freed from disarmament or from military expenditure, would significantly contribute to fulfilling the resource crunch to meet the development needs in many of the developing countries. But we have yet to make any progress in releasing the disarmament dividend, to the benefit of much-needed socio-economic development.

It is a matter of concern that there has been very little progress on disarmament lately. At the 2005 World Summit, no understanding could be reached on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. That was preceded by failure at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to agree on any substantive recommendations. This year no agreement could be reached on the review of the control of small arms and lights weapons. The Conference on Disarmament, one of the main mechanisms for disarmament negotiations within the United Nations, has not produced any substantive outcome since 1997. The Disarmament Commission, the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations for multilateral disarmament, is also registering slow progress.

The message is loud and clear: we are not serious about disarmament. Clearly, we need greater political will and a renewed focus to revive genuine negotiations on disarmament issues. It is Nepal's long-standing position that there should be complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical and radiological weapons, in a time-bound manner.

Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons pose the greatest threat to international peace and security. There is also a potential danger of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors and even terrorists. In the absence of any global international treaty to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we have to rely on the

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implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions to that effect.

My delegation supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery and related materials.

There is growing concern over the increasing impasse on nuclear issues involving some aspiring nuclear States, the more so because some of them are outside the framework of negotiations in the United Nations. Nepal strongly believes that all nuclear issues, including the peaceful use of nuclear technology, must be resolved through negotiations, preferably within the purview of the United Nations.

Nepal values multilateralism as the sole mechanism for negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation that will lead to durable world peace.

We cannot resolve the nuclear issues and the issues related to weapons of mass destruction unless we apply certain ground rules and principles evolved at the United Nations. While those stand-offs are resolved, efforts must be made to respect the principles of national sovereignty and the mechanism of collective security within the United Nations. Similarly, States cannot absolve themselves of their international obligations to comply with relevant treaty regimes for non-proliferation, test ban and peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Nepal welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an effective way to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and supports them as a means to advance the cause of disarmament.

As a country that experienced a decade-long conflict, which ended only recently, Nepal supports the non-proliferation and prevention of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Since the adoption in 2001 of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, there has been little progress. As the Review Conference on the control of small arms and light weapons ended without agreement, we need to make genuine efforts to revive this process to discourage the illicit small arms trade and prevent the illicit production, use and stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, mainly by non-State actors.

Nepal is unequivocally opposed to an arms race in outer space, which must remain free of deadly weapons, and must only be used for peaceful collective human endeavours.

The role of regional centres for peace and disarmament is crucial to galvanizing the pace of disarmament and the process of arms control at the regional level. As host country for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal is fully committed to early relocation of the Centre to Kathmandu. The Government of Nepal has expressed its readiness to sign the host country agreement in accordance with the General Assembly resolution. I reiterate the long-standing commitment of the Government of Nepal to bear the operating costs of the Centre and to accord privileges and immunities to its personnel. We urge the Secretariat to complete the internal procedure for the host country agreement and memorandum of understanding at the earliest for the relocation of the Centre to Nepal without any further delay.

The issue of disarmament has a great bearing on the maintenance of international peace and security. However, to our utter dismay, it appears to have been pushed to the back burner of the international agenda. Nepal has abiding faith in the promise of collective resolve and determination to be exercised through the United Nations. The active and influential role of the United Nations alone can push collective action and concerted effort towards realizing the objectives of disarmament, regulation of armaments and the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, in the greater interest of all humankind. It is time to work hard collectively to put multilateral disarmament on the right track.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): I join other speakers in conveying my delegation's congratulations to you, Madam, on your assumption of our Chair, and assure you of our full cooperation to ensure the success of your stewardship.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia, on behalf of the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively.

We are meeting at a period of great strains on international security, with the spectre of new challenges exacerbating the existing fragile environment. Growing hotbeds of tension, militarism and terrorism, as well as fears of cascading horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation, threaten to unravel the international system of collective security. In this grave atmosphere, it is worrisome that the several treaties on disarmament, which if implemented would have constituted an arms control framework, continue to be a litany of broken promises.

Indeed, our disappointment over last year's abysmal developments within the international disarmament system is yet to be assuaged, due to the stagnation, if not retrogression, in the disarmament realm. Given this grim condition, we cannot but stress that international peace and security is at a critical crossroads, and that innovative, bold, realistic and achievable solutions are required.

In pursuit of the collective security which we all generally deem necessary, it is imperative that we focus on building a global security environment underpinned by mutual cooperation and trust. For that to be achieved, we should expunge unilateralism, which is often influenced and fuelled by parochial interests stemming from antedated policies that are inconsistent with present realities and therefore doomed to failure. It should be replaced by multilateralism, which the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission has recognized as the only viable option for the pursuit of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. To that end, we urge Member States not only to espouse multilateralism, but also to exhibit genuine commitment and the political will to objectively and faithfully abide by the outcome of such negotiations.

Even though for more than four decades nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation have remained the predominant, albeit not exclusive, challenges to international security, the world continues to be haunted by the nuclear menace, despite overwhelming international support for meaningful progress on the issues. Indeed, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation seem to be plunging into an irredeemable abyss as a result of the absence of an even-handed and coordinated approach, as well as the undue attention paid to the symptoms rather than the fundamental causes undermining the process. If we all acknowledged that the two are complementary and mutually reinforcing, then the prevailing lopsided relationship would be reversed, thus stemming a looming accretion of nuclearism, with its attendant adverse ramifications for international security.

Without tangible progress in disarmament, the current emphasis on non-proliferation cannot be sustained. Despite its inherent flaws, we all reckon that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone for work in pursuit of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is therefore imperative that State parties take urgent measures to revive confidence and credibility in the Treaty through scrupulous compliance with its provisions.

The non-nuclear-weapon States parties have faithfully discharged their part of the bargain, as evidenced by the inconsequential change in the membership of the "haves", and they naturally expect the same from their partners. We therefore urge those five countries to go beyond paying lip service to article VI and take steps towards nuclear disarmament. Concrete achievement in the implementation of the 13 practical steps is essential in this regard.

We are among the first to recognize the considerable reduction in nuclear arsenals, but the existence of 27,000 nuclear weapons, some on high alert, makes a mockery of so-called progressive development, and has failed to lessen the general fear that the world remains insecure and vulnerable to mass destruction. Our position is also predicated on the fact that those reductions are undertaken without international verification and a firm commitment to irreversibility.

We stress that a verifiable and irreversible disarmament process is essential to the long-term credibility and viability of the NPT. It will be difficult for nuclear-weapon States to take the high moral ground in trying to prevent others from aspiring to join the so-called elitist club, unless they unambiguously abide by their disarmament obligations, abandon their nuclear deterrence policy and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security in order to negate its erroneous grandeur in international relations and thereby dissuade others from striving to acquire such heinous weapons.

Irrespective of our strong reservations about the growing focus on non-proliferation, my delegation views as ironic the intransigent position of some of the

leading proponents of that unjustifiable policy on nuclear-weapon-free zones and negative security assurances, which have been widely recognized as complementary measures to enhance the non-proliferation regime. We call on those countries to exhibit sincerity in their conviction by favourably considering the clarion call for a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances and also to extend the necessary support for the strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

As a country that acquired an atomic reactor in the 1960s, Ghana will continue to strongly advocate for the right of States, especially developing countries, to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, given its immense contribution to socio-economic development. However, we also acknowledge that this inalienable right should be pursued under the rubric of international agreements, especially with respect to verifiability and transparency. My delegation thus joins others in calling for the verification mechanism of the International Atomic Energy Agency to be strengthened to enable the Agency to scrupulously discharge its onerous responsibility.

Although our concerted effort to prevent nuclear terrorism is progressing steadily, it would be greatly advanced by an agreement on banning the production of fissile material. In this connection, we welcome the holding of a debate within the Conference on Disarmament on the banning of the production of fissile materials for military purposes, as a positive measure to overcome the protracted stalemate over the issue. We call on the Conference on Disarmament to sustain the momentum by expediting action on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to facilitate the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty devoid of any preconditions, but with the aim of reaching an agreement addressing the concerns of all parties.

Illicit small arms and light weapons, a misnomer for lethal instruments whose abuse has wrought havoc, caused untold distress to millions of people and fuelled insecurity and instability across the globe, continue to be of grave concern to my delegation. While laudable progress has been made since the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action in 2001, we are yet to attain the envisaged objective and thereby stifle the obnoxious malpractices of callous persons who have turned wanton deaths into a lucrative business. We are disheartened by the outcome of the recent Conference to review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Although it was a missed opportunity, we should not be discouraged, but, rather, should resolve to vigorously pursue our collective effort to achieve the ultimate aim. We owe it to the numerous victims who look up to this lofty Organization to lead efforts to stem the proliferation of those weapons of mass destruction, as well as to realise their dream that others should be protected from the tragic ordeal that they have suffered and continue to suffer.

We are under no illusion that the goal of a world free from the fear of war and insecurity will be achieved overnight. However, with tenacity of conviction and unity of purpose, we shall overcome the odds and realize our collective aspirations. We have a choice: either to protect the world and humanity from destruction or plunge it further into eventual annihilation. We hope that our decisions will resonate with the desire of the majority outside this room, who pray and clamour daily for a safe and peaceful world.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation offers its warm congratulations to you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. Indeed, we are delighted, because your election as a woman blazes a trail in the Committee's history. We are confident that you will provide the requisite leadership to steer our work to a successful conclusion. We express similar sentiments to the other members of the Bureau, and assure you of our cooperation throughout the session. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Tanaka, for his introductory statement.

This meeting is being held at a time when the international community faces increasingly divergent views on how best to address the issues of arms control and disarmament. The need to implement disarmament and non-proliferation measures continues to be a major challenge to the maintenance of international peace and security. The last decade witnessed the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the successful negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. Those achievements flowed from shared international concerns about the

danger that weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons pose to mankind.

By contrast, the international community has made no appreciable progress on arms control and disarmament since the beginning of this decade, the most notable failures being the lack of an outcome to the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the failure by Member States to agree on a thematic cluster on disarmament and non-proliferation in the World Summit Outcome. Those failures are additional to the perennial impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the lingering ambivalence about the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. While Nigeria shares the view of the majority of delegations that the treaty should contain a reliable verification mechanism, which should not exclude existing stockpiles, the debate over this issue should not be used as an excuse for inaction or delay on the commencement of substantive negotiations on this important subject.

The risk to international peace and security posed by the prevailing stalemate in multilateral disarmament negotiations is glaring. It is common knowledge that threats emanating from the excessive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction could be a factor stimulating others to acquire them as well. The report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission amply described the danger inherent in weapons accumulation, when it stated that States would aspire to acquire nuclear weapons as long as any State had them, and the risk exists that such weapons will one day be used either by design or by accident as long as they remain.

This is why the problem of lack of compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation regime under the NPT is worrisome. There is no gainsaying the fact that the Treaty remains one of the most vital instruments for maintaining global peace and security. Should it persist, the mistaken impression that the obligation to comply with the Treaty lies only with non-nuclear-weapon States parties can only be detrimental to the aims and objectives of the Treaty. Nigeria reaffirms that all States parties, nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon alike, have an obligation to ensure non-proliferation in all its aspects. States that possess nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction can no longer pretend that their weapons pose no threat to the international community.

The call for non-proliferation must be complemented by concrete action in the area of nuclear disarmament. That is the most effective way to ensure that such weapons do not fall into the hands of non-State actors. Indeed, States that feel threatened by the possession of those weapons need to be assured, through confidence-building measures as well as security guarantees anchored in legally binding instruments, that their decisions to forgo the acquisition of the weapons were not misplaced.

Nigeria will continue to abide by its commitments under the various disarmament and arms control agreements to which it is party, as well as to work with other nations in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects. Such cooperation should lead to the achievement of the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT. Yet the Treaty has not entered into force, despite the fact that 176 States have signed it and 135 have ratified it. While reiterating our support for the total elimination of nuclear testing, we wish to stress the importance of achieving the Treaty's entry into force, in particular through adherence by the remaining annex II States, whose ratification is mandatory for the Treaty to enter into force. Nigeria welcomes the ratification of the Treaty by Viet Nam, last March, and endorses the joint ministerial declaration on the CTBT adopted in New York on 20 September this year. Pending its entry into force, the Treaty should continue to enjoy the support of Member States, which we call upon to continue to maintain the existing moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device.

Nigeria reiterates its support for the concept of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in the regions concerned. As a demonstration of our commitment to the denuclearization of Africa, Nigeria initiated in January this year, at the eighth ordinary session of the Executive Council of the African Union, held in Khartoum, the Sudan, a proposal that the Council adopted in a decision calling on States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba — on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone — or the relevant protocols, to do so, in order to enable the Treaty to

enter into force without further delay. We urge the States concerned to implement or comply with, as applicable, the decision of the Council.

We also welcome the signing by five Central Asian States on 8 September this year of the treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, to be held in November, offers an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the international regime in confronting and removing the threat of biological weapons and their use. An effective verification mechanism will strengthen the Convention in that regard. We trust that States parties will give serious consideration to that matter during the Review Conference.

In the West African subregion, the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons has fuelled conflicts and compromised our well-thought-out efforts to create a basis for peace, security and stability in a number of our countries. Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which initiated and faithfully maintained a Moratorium on the importation and exportation of such arms, have now transformed the Moratorium into a landmark Convention. Adopted in June this year, the Convention, inter alia, places a ban on transfers of arms and materials used in their manufacture into, from or through West Africa.

Of particular significance for our region is the ban on the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors, who have been implicated in the recurrent conflicts in the subregion and the attendant political instability and destruction of infrastructure. A member State of ECOWAS shall be granted exemption for such transfers solely for purposes of legitimate national defence and security needs or in order to participate in peacekeeping efforts, and the transfers will have to receive the certification and approval of other Member States.

Our determination to eradicate the scourge from our subregion is therefore not in doubt. We call upon the international community, manufacturers of small arms and light weapons and brokering firms to respect the Convention. Nigeria invites other Members of the United Nations to follow the example of ECOWAS in confronting this menace.

The Nigerian delegation wishes to express its disappointment over the failure to agree on a final document at the first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That failure must not detract from the continuing relevance of the Programme as a valid platform for national, regional and global action. The review process should be kept alive, and the follow-up arrangements adhered to, in order to ensure the realization of shared goals and objectives.

As a demonstration of Nigeria's commitment to the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons, the Nigerian Government this year acceded to the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which entered into force in July 2005. In that regard, I recall the statement delivered on behalf of President Obasanjo to the General Assembly in September: "We also call for a comprehensive and legally binding global arms trade treaty." (A/61/PV.18, p. 12) We believe that such a treaty should establish common standards on arms transfers. We shall work with delegations for the success of that goal.

Finally, the Nigerian delegation will again this year sponsor a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme". The Programme has trained 704 fellows from 155 States. We appreciate the support of Member States that have continued to provide resources and facilities for participants. We are equally grateful to the Secretary-General for the able manner in which he has implemented the Programme over the years. It is our hope that co-sponsors will support the draft resolution at this session, and that many more States will do likewise.

Mr. Tun (Myanmar): I have the privilege to take the floor on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country.

ASEAN congratulates you, Madam, on your well-deserved election. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. ASEAN also welcomes the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament

Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka. We give an assurance of our full cooperation.

We are meeting at a time of heightened disappointment in and concern about the lack of progress in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The disappointing outcome of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the impasse at the Conference on Disarmament are serious setbacks we have suffered in the past year. It is imperative that we draw lessons from our failures and move forward.

In the light of the daunting challenges we face due to deep-rooted animosities in some regions of the world, compounded by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the growing threat of terrorism, the international community must join hands. ASEAN therefore welcomes the high-level Security Council debate on closer cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, which was held on 20 September 2006.

The ASEAN countries reaffirm their support for the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, underlining the existence of an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In that regard, ASEAN countries intend to co-sponsor the draft resolution introduced annually by Malaysia reaffirming that important ruling.

Likewise, ASEAN countries intend to co-sponsor the draft resolution initiated by Myanmar calling upon the nuclear-weapon States to cease immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The draft resolution also calls for the convening at an early date of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

It is our earnest hope that both draft resolutions will continue to enjoy widespread support in the Committee.

ASEAN countries have consistently underscored the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We reiterate our call on nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

We welcome the Final Declaration of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York in September 2005, as well as the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT issued last month in New York. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature. The Treaty now enjoys nearly universal support, as it has been signed by 176 States and ratified by 135. We welcome its ratification by Viet Nam in March this year. It is our hope that the ratification by 10 more countries required for its entry into force will follow soon.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. ASEAN is therefore deeply disappointed that the 2005 Review Conference, held in New York, was unable to adopt a final document, due to deep divisions between several States parties. It is imperative that the 2010 Review Conference does not suffer the same fate. The preparatory process, which is scheduled to start next year, will be crucial in laying the groundwork for the Review Conference. ASEAN urges all Member States to work towards consensus to meet the common threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We emphasize the importance of full and non-selective implementation of the NPT. We reiterate our view that their total elimination is the only absolute guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. We renew our call for the full and effective implementation of the practical steps set out in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. In that connection, we are convinced that there exists an urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT.

ASEAN shares the view that there is also an urgent need for a comprehensive approach to the proliferation of missiles. ASEAN considers the entry into force of the 2002 Moscow Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reduction to be an important step towards reducing strategic nuclear weapons. We continue to believe that the concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through agreements

that are multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory.

Chemical and biological weapons also pose a growing threat. As the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has a vital role in countering the challenge posed by those weapons, ASEAN is encouraged to note that 180 States, representing 98 per cent of the global population, have acceded to the Convention, making it nearly universal. We invite all States that have not yet signed or ratified it to do so as soon as possible.

We also call on States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction as soon as possible. We look forward to the successful outcome of the upcoming Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is to be held in Geneva next month.

The ASEAN countries remain deeply concerned by the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions. We recognize the need to establish and maintain control over private ownership of small arms. We call on States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited to Governments, or entities duly authorized by Governments, and to implement legal restrictions preventing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

We encourage all initiatives by States to mobilize resources and expertise, as well as to provide assistance, to strengthen the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We are disappointed at the inability of the United Nations Conference to review progress in its implementation, which was held in New York in June, to agree on a final document.

We take note of the fact that the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has been ratified, and acceded to, by 151 countries.

ASEAN reiterates its support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We reiterate our deep concern over the lack of progress in the Disarmament Commission on the agenda and objectives. Steps leading to the convening of the fourth special session, with the participation of all Member States, to review and assess the implementation of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, should be taken expeditiously.

ASEAN has put forward initiatives that have significantly contributed to peace and security in the region. Among them was the establishment of the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. The accession of nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty establishing the zone will further strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, thereby enhancing regional peace and security. We believe that the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, contribute to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We welcome last month's signing by five Central Asian countries of the Treaty establishing a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiation forum on disarmament cannot be overemphasized. We are therefore deeply disappointed by the continuing impasse there, and note with regret the Conference's inability to adopt its programme of work for 2006. We also regret that this year the Conference was not able to submit its substantive report to the First Committee. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament, and exercise political will to overcome that deadlock.

We take this opportunity to express once again our appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and in Africa, for their contribution to international peace and security. Regional seminars and forums organized by those Centres contribute to the progress of ongoing security and disarmament processes in their respective regions. We appreciate and fully support the substantial contribution of the Centres in raising awareness about disarmament issues.

ASEAN has been making important contributions to regional peace and security. We recall the signing of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II at the Ninth ASEAN Summit, held in Bali, Indonesia, in 2003, which decided to establish an ASEAN Community comprising three pillars: political and security cooperation, economic cooperation and socio-cultural cooperation. That is in line with ASEAN Vision 2020, which envisages ASEAN as a community of nations bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies.

We also recall the adoption by the ASEAN leaders of the Vientiane Action Programme, the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Plan of Action, as well as the signing of the ASEAN Framework Agreement for the Integration of Priority Sectors and the progress made in the implementation of programmes and projects building up to the realization of the ASEAN Community, as enshrined in the Bali Concord II.

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence-building measures among participants in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). At the ARF meeting held in Kuala Lumpur in July this year, we welcomed Bangladesh as the twenty-sixth participating country. We are confident that Bangladesh's participation will contribute to enhancing political stability and security in the region. The activities of the Forum have contributed to political stability, security and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia is an instrument of peace, security and cooperation in inter-State relations. To date, 10 countries outside ASEAN have acceded to it. Those accessions testify to the continued relevance of the Treaty in contributing to regional peace, security and stability. In that context, we welcome the accession of Australia on 10 December 2005. We also welcome France's decision to accede to it. Timor-Leste and the European Union have also indicated their intention to accede. It is our hope that other external partners will do so in the near future, so as to create a favourable environment conducive to development in the region. That would benefit not only ASEAN, but all its partners.

In conclusion, I wish to state that it is ASEAN's hope that the First Committee will be able to successfully hold substantive deliberations on the issues on our agenda and turn small steps into larger strides. Let us work together to restore confidence in this Committee and other disarmament forums. In that spirit of cooperation, we look forward to working closely with you, Madam Chairperson, to ensure that our work is fruitful.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation I extend to you, Madam, my most sincere congratulations on the confidence placed in you through your election as Chairperson of this very important Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We look forward to cooperating with the Committee to ensure that our work is as successful as we all desire.

My delegation also expresses its gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, for his comprehensive statement and for his constructive role in supporting and ensuring the success of our work.

We also express our support for the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Allow me also to convey my greetings to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, who is with us today.

The pessimism that permeates the current international political scene is in sharp contrast to the optimism that prevailed throughout the international community following the end of the period of international tensions in the early 1990s. That atmosphere of pessimism is cause for serious concern, given repeated attempts by some to impose faulty and short-sighted policies that contravene the purposes and principles of the Charter, thereby flouting the language of dialogue and respect for the interests of others and encouraging the language of force, repression and subjugation in an environment that cannot countenance such an approach.

That situation prompts us to recognize the urgent need to intensify sincere efforts and transparent political will to respect the Charter and endeavour to work in a multilateral and transparent framework to restore the confidence of the international community

in international organizations and restore balance in international relations.

It is more urgent than ever that we work intensely to achieve disarmament in the area of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, so as to protect humankind from the danger of the use or threat of use of such weapons and avert the serious current and future environmental dangers resulting from military nuclear reactors and buried underground nuclear waste — a practice carried out by Israel, the occupying Power in the Syrian Golan. In that regard, we stress that it is important that the Committee should devote particular attention to avoiding double standards and discrimination against the interests of peoples under various names and classifications.

An example of that is the assistance provided by some to an aggressor State like Israel, which has been condemned by the international community hundreds of times for its occupation by force of the territories of others and its suppression of the rights of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State on their national territory. I would also mention that some are also helping aggressor States like Israel to possess nuclear military technology, and providing them with all the means, expertise and equipment necessary to manufacture nuclear weapons. In doing so those countries providing assistance are ignoring all international regulations and United Nations resolutions governing this field. At the same time, they are also pressuring other States through flimsy political pretexts to prevent them from using nuclear energy for purely civilian peaceful purposes.

The fact that Israel has built eight nuclear reactors — which actually produce plutonium for building nuclear bombs — on a piece of land of no more than 20,000 square kilometres should be addressed quickly and decisively, for these reactors threaten the security of every country in the region without exception.

Super-Powers violated their international obligations with regard to nuclear non-proliferation when for decades they provided — as they continue to provide — Israel with nuclear reactors, deuterium, scientists, nuclear technology and the means to deliver nuclear weapons with missiles. A European State recently provided Israel with three submarines capable of carrying and launching nuclear missiles. Another European State is currently participating in Israel's military activities in space, namely, its Venus project, which includes a satellite used for military purposes. It would be much better for those States to question themselves about these policies, which undermine the credibility of their claims that they are working to bring about the universality of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

My country has repeatedly expressed its wish to make the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. Syria submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council on 29 January 2003 to make this region free from all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Regrettably, so far this initiative has not been adopted and is still in blue before the Council for its consideration because of the opposition of the delegation of one of the major States and the double standards used by that delegation in dealing with issues of weapons of mass destruction.

Because of the inability of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to adopt that resolution, Israel continues to challenge the international community by continuing its military nuclear programmes and by its refusal to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to subject its nuclear facilities and activities to IAEA supervision.

Israel is a source of conventional and nuclear terrorism in our region. It is an insurmountable obstacle to the security and safety of the Middle East region. Needless to say, for a long time the international community has understood that position of Israel, which violates all international norms regulating nuclear proliferation and strongly harms the credibility and universality of the NPT. It also prevents the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East following the example of the Treaties of Rarotonga, Pelindaba, Bangkok, Tlatelolco and Semipalatinsk.

My delegation calls upon the international community to call for the following. First, Israel — the only State in the region that possesses nuclear facilities and a nuclear arsenal — must adhere to the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards of the IAEA. It must completely eliminate its entire arsenal of such weapons on the basis of Security Council resolution 487 (1981). Secondly, the United Nations and the IAEA should be endorsed as the best framework for serious talks in order to

establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Some voices have loudly claimed, in referring to the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978, at which the international community set priorities to work seriously to bring about nuclear disarmament first, then disarmament of the other weapons of mass destruction and finally conventional weapons, that that has become anachronistic and inappropriate for the present time. My delegation would point out that those voices are not really being truthful, because we have to remind everyone that stopping the United Nations from bringing about those three priorities, agreed internationally, is what led to the weakening of international treaties and international controls to bring about full disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. That is what led to the halting of the work of the Disarmament Commission and the Commission on Disarmament. The insistence of nuclear-weapon States on not fulfilling their obligations according to the outcomes and results of the two review conferences of 1995 and 2000 is the real reason for the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. They also led to the international community's complaint about the presence of blatant selectivity and flagrant injustice in dealing with disarmament issues. These two factors also increase our suspicions about the ability of international instruments to maintain their credibility.

The Syrian Arab Republic follows disarmament issues closely and emphasizes its obligations to support the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction in the world in general and in the Middle East in particular, since my country has been a party since 1968 to the NPT and is in compliance with the corresponding full safeguards régime. My country supports General Assembly resolution 55/33 X, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons". We call for practical steps to set a specific timetable and programme for the full elimination of nuclear weapons, totally under effective international control.

Mr. Chem (Cambodia): At the outset, allow me to sincerely congratulate you, Madam, upon your election as Chairperson. My delegation believes that under your able direction our deliberations will be successful. You can rest assured of our full support and cooperation. We also warmly welcome Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, and wish him success in that important post.

Cambodia associates itself with the statement by Ambassador Rezlan Ishar Jenie, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia, on behalf of members of the Non-Aligned Movement and also the statement by the Ambassador of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In the face of uncertainties and challenges, when the world seems to be overwhelmed by conflict and serious threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, environmental degradation and infectious diseases, it is important for all of us to keep our commitment to maintain peace and security in the world. We are successful in producing larger quantities of weapons notorious for individual or mass killing, but we have been far less successful in reducing them.

On the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, my delegation expresses its disappointment that the 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference ended with failure and that the 2005 World Summit Outcome did not include any section on disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT regime and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) need to be reinforced; they remain basic legal instruments for the long-term achievement of complete and irreversible disarmament.

Being genuinely committed to countering the proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction, Cambodia has ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), becoming a State party in August 2005. Cambodia calls on all States that have not yet become party to the CWC to do so in order to achieve universal adherence to it. My delegation believes that that would ensure the universal validity of that multilateral instrument, which bans the development, production, excessive stockpiling, use or transfer of chemical weapons, and would enhance collective security.

Cambodia is a non-nuclear-energy-producing country. Nonetheless, we have ratified a number of conventions: the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; the Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection; the International Convention for the Suppression of

Terrorist Bombings; and the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages. In accordance with article VII (4) of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Royal Government of Cambodia has established a National Authority to prohibit nuclear, biological and radioactive weapons as a positive step to actively implement the Convention.

Progress on the issue of small arms has been hampered because of disagreement on the final document of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Despite that fact, we should not be discouraged, and we must continue to do more work to address this issue.

After three decades of war, genocide and conflict, Cambodia is well placed to reiterate its unequivocal commitment to the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons in order to cement peace, security and political stability in the Kingdom. It has developed a number of programmes, ranging from law enforcement on arms control to the "Weapon for Development" programme, which has led to the destruction of nearly 200,000 units of collected and surplus weapons since 1998.

My delegation takes this opportunity to express its deep thanks and appreciation to Japan and the European Union for their valuable assistance to the programmes. In June this year the European Union announced its completion of its assistance projects, leaving Japan as the sole partner with the Government. Being successful in small arms control, weapon collection and destruction, Cambodia has been endorsed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a "Lead Shepherd" country — a country that coordinates ASEAN member States — in countering arms smuggling. That was done at the Fifth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, held in Hanoi in November 2005.

Cambodia accordingly proposed establishing a resource centre as a coordinating body to facilitate and mobilize efforts and resources to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in South-East Asia. We would highly appreciate and welcome support from the international community to realize the important goal of setting up the Centre, which would make an important contribution to our common struggle against transnational crime and terrorism.

On the international front, Cambodia reiterates its unequivocal commitment to the full implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects by developing national programmes for the control of small arms, such as the long-standing plan to curb the illicit small arms trade.

The concern over the proliferation of small arms could be successfully addressed through a multifaceted mechanism, and the United Nations is the option we are looking for. More concerted efforts and political commitment are needed so that we can achieve the common interest. In this connection, my delegation welcomes this year's report (S/2006/109) of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, especially on the 12 core recommendations in his September 2002 report (S/2002/1053) and the observations and conclusions, which Member States should use as a good foundation to prevent and reduce the spread of small arms. My delegation stands ready to join hands with others on those issues.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): On behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I congratulate you, Madam, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to steer the work of the First Committee at the present session. We are confident, Madam, that with your rich experience in multilateral diplomacy, you will guide this important session to a successful conclusion. We assure you of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Choi Young-jin, of the Republic of Korea, for his work as Chairman during the previous session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the statement made by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, we would like to highlight the following points, which we think are of great significance to world peace and security.

Today's international situation continues to undergo rapid and complex changes. Our world

remains plagued with insecurity, injustice, armed conflicts, acts of aggression, terror, ethnic strife, interference in the internal affairs of States, civil wars, natural disasters, disease, poverty and energy instability, which all pose major threats to world peace and security.

At the same time, humankind still lives under the threat of nuclear weapons, due to the fact that the commitment the international community made 35 years ago to rid the world of nuclear weapons has not been met, nor have nuclear arsenals been decreased or dismantled. On the contrary, those weapons have grown tremendously, both in quantity and quality. So has the number of nuclear-weapon States. All this has also increased the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists.

In the face of such a situation, efforts should be made seriously and honestly by all States concerned, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, which have the legal obligation under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects.

The performance of the NPT over the past years has not yielded expected results. The negotiations on banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices have yet to begin. It is regrettable that very little progress has been achieved on this issue. In that regard, we earnestly hope that the Conference on Disarmament will conclude at an early date the negotiations for a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As party to the CTBT since October 2000, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has actively participated in the seminars organized by the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, as well as the annual meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum. In that regard, we welcome Viet Nam's ratification of the CTBT in March this year, and reaffirm the importance and urgency of the entry into force of the instrument. We also take this opportunity to call upon all States that have not yet ratified the Treaty, particularly those whose ratification is required for its entry into force, to do so without delay.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world, and calls for cooperation and broad consultations in order to achieve agreements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned. We strongly believe that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes a positive step towards freeing humankind from the threat of nuclear weapons and achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we welcome and support the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a State party to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the Bangkok Treaty. As such, we have done our best to contribute to ASEAN's common efforts in that respect.

We also welcome Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as the signing at Semipalatinsk on 8 September by five Central Asian countries of the Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In that context, it is essential that nuclear-weapon-States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the nuclear-weapon-free zones concerned.

Like many other delegations, that of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is of the view that, in addressing the important disarmament and international security issues, the role of the Conference on Disarmament, as the multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, should be reaffirmed. In that regard, we reiterate our principled position in support of the initiative to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We express the hope that the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session will be reconvened at an early date, as mandated by the General Assembly, with a view to reaching agreement on its objectives and agenda.

In the light of negative developments, we cannot but share the concern of the world community about the failure of the recent Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit

Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. However, the Lao People's Democratic Republic believes that the Programme of Action is a living document, which remains a framework for cooperation that empowers States to continue to work for its full and effective implementation.

Equally essential for the maintenance of international and regional peace and security is universal adherence to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). There is a special need to strengthen it through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol to the Convention. Our delegation is also of the view that the threat of biological weapons as instruments of war and terror has stressed the necessity and urgency of ensuring the Convention's effectiveness. In that respect, we commend the positive efforts made by States parties to the BTWC at the Fifth Review Conference. We look forward to further progress in strengthening the Convention at the upcoming Sixth Review Conference, to be held in Geneva.

Having learned from past experience about the danger of nuclear weapons, we cannot but stress the need for the world community to make every effort to ensure that mankind can live in the world of the twenty-first century without the threat of such weapons. We strongly believe that their total elimination is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of their use. We also believe that non-nuclear-weapon States should be effectively assured by nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. To that end, my delegation hopes that this session will provide an excellent opportunity for all of us to look into all possible ways and means to implement all the commitments made.

With concerted efforts and a high sense of responsibility for world peace and security and the destiny of mankind, we should all work together towards the common objective of achieving general and complete disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament. Disarmament cannot be fully attained without the political will and support of all Members of the United Nations. It is time to spare no effort to get the disarmament process back on track, move forward and build a world of peace and equitable development, free of nuclear weapons.

On that note, I wish the Committee great success at our current session.

Mr. Walsh (Canada): Allow me first to congratulate you, Madam, and the other members of the Bureau on your election, and to express my delegation's confidence that under your leadership the Committee will have a fruitful session.

The work of this Committee is of particular significance at this juncture, with the outlook for multilateral arms control and disarmament remaining very much an open question. Three review conferences of major treaties or programmes were scheduled in 2006. One has taken place already, and two more will get under way in November. Following last year's outcomes at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Millennium + 5 Summit, we need to get back on a positive track.

The first of the 2006 review conferences, relating to the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, took place here in New York in July. Regrettably, States were unable to agree on an outcome document. Canada was disappointed that agreement could not be reached on an issue of such great relevance to the membership of the General Assembly, and on which there is wide support for many specific objectives. In Canada's view, the seriousness of the humanitarian impact of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons requires continued, concerted action by the international community. The resolutions emerging from the First Committee may provide significant impetus to practical follow-up to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

In five weeks, the Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will be under way in Geneva. Here again, the States parties to the Convention will have an opportunity to advance the humanitarian-motivated aims of the CCW and consolidate its application. The entry into force of protocol V, on explosive remnants of war, will be celebrated at the Conference. Recent events only serve to demonstrate how important it is for the standards embodied by the Convention to become general practice.

Immediately following the CCW review, the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons will be held, also in Geneva. Against the backdrop of concerns about

biological terrorism, it is crucial that the Treaty's core prohibition against biological weapons be reaffirmed and reinforced. Canada has developed a series of practical proposals for enhancing the effectiveness and authority of the Convention. Those have been set out in a working paper entitled "An accountability framework", and cover issues such as annual meetings, procedures for improved confidence-building measures and organized implementation support. We have already begun working with other States parties so that we can emerge from the Review Conference with tangible results that strengthen the purposes of the Treaty.

Looking ahead to 2007, we face additional challenges in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament field. Our work in the First Committee can make important contributions in that regard. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has not come to grips with the challenges posed by the defection of North Korea from the Treaty and continued concerns over compliance by Iran with its obligations pursuant to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Security Council resolutions.

Canada believes that the power and authority of the NPT need to be reinforced in the face of those and other challenges, or we risk seeing the non-proliferation norm undermined and the world slipping back into an unregulated competition for nuclear weapons. Canada has in the past set out several suggestions for a revamped NPT process that would entail at least annual meetings of an authoritative gathering of States parties and a standing bureau to provide stewardship and continuity. We hope that the First Committee will provide positive direction to that process as we look ahead to the first NPT meeting of a new review cycle, in the spring of 2007.

At the St. Petersburg Summit this July, Canada and its G8 partners dedicated themselves to the reinvigoration of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation forums "beginning with the Conference on Disarmament". The protracted stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament has prevented it from undertaking the purposeful negotiating work it was set up to do. This year an innovation, the so-called Six Presidents Initiative, has allowed the Conference to follow a year-long timetable providing for a focused discussion on all seven of its substantive agenda items. However, that timetable only allocated one week of discussion per agenda item, and made no differentiation between items like a fissile materials cut-off treaty, which enjoys wide support and is ripe for negotiation, and an item such as "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", with no current proposal for action.

While the solution to the impasse at the Conference on Disarmament must emerge from Geneva, and not New York, we hope concerned States will continue to support the efforts of the outgoing and incoming Presidents of the Conference — Slovakia and South Africa — to identify recommendations that will enable the Conference to resume substantive and sustained work when it reconvenes in January.

Among the key pieces of unfinished business in the nuclear-weapon file is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We need to encourage the last 10 annex II States to sign or ratify the Treaty. Canada was pleased to join with other "Friends of the CTBT" here last month to focus political attention on the need to put into place this crucial support beam for the nuclear non-proliferation edifice.

Of course, concern over the state of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament environment is not limited to the diplomats in this room. The cross-regional non-governmental organization grouping, "The Middle Powers Initiative" recently launched its Article VI Forum as a means of promoting greater cooperation between civil society and Governments in the pursuit of the NPT goals. The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was pleased to support the Forum in Ottawa on 28 and 29 September. We hope that those who participated in it will have come away with better insights into current problems facing the regime, and a renewed sense of purpose to find practical solutions.

Canada continues to play a leading role in the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, aimed at expediting the fulfilment of disarmament commitments and preventing the threat of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We recently announced over $150 million in contributions for projects in Russia and other States of the former Soviet Union.

The First Committee has shown itself capable of considerable reform in recent years, and we look forward to continued progress in that regard. Canada intends to contribute actively to the structured discussion of key themes such as outer space security,

nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; conventional arms control and an arms trade treaty; and verification. We are leading on draft resolutions devoted to initiating negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile materials cut-off treaty, and providing for follow-up to the report of the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on Verification. We will also work constructively with partners on a range of other issues before the Committee.

To the extent that this universal body can demonstrate, in its deliberations, a substantive and positive approach to tackling the many challenges of the multilateral disarmament realm, it will provide useful impetus and backing as we carry our work forward in the relevant forums over the next 12 months.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): At the outset, I join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the members of the Bureau on their election. As a woman myself, I personally welcome women's leading role in the United Nations this year, from the President of the General Assembly to yourself, Madam. Without a doubt, you have a challenging task ahead of you. However, my delegation is optimistic that, with your experience and able leadership, you can effectively guide our work in the First Committee to a successful conclusion.

I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, for his introductory statement, which is very useful for our work.

Thailand aligns itself with the statement made earlier this week by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the statement made today by the representative of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The sixty-first session of the General Assembly has convened under heightened international anxiety about the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are issues of concern to Member States. During the general debate, both in the Assembly and in the First Committee, Member States have expressed concern over the lack of progress on disarmament issues, the global threat posed by armed conflicts and the menace of terrorism.

In particular, Member States have voiced concern over the lack of progress in the multilateral machinery dealing with disarmament issues, the failure of the World Summit Outcome document to include provisions on disarmament and non-proliferation, and the fact that last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons concluded without progress on that substantive agenda item. To cap it all, the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July this year, was only able to adopt a procedural report, without a substantive outcome document.

Nuclear weapons, along with other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, never discriminate between civilians and combatants. With their devastating and merciless impact, such weapons should by no means be used against humankind, even as a last resort. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Thailand believes that both disarmament and non-proliferation are faces of the same coin, and should be addressed in a constructive and balanced manner. Nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States have an equal and shared responsibility to see to it that both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are fully implemented. As for Thailand, the Thai Government is in the process of amending domestic laws and regulations in order to ratify the CTBT after the process has been completed.

While addressing the issue of weapons of mass destruction as a matter of grave concern, we should remind ourselves that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is also a serious threat to international peace and security. It has been estimated that 60 per cent to 90 per cent of deaths in violent conflicts are caused by small arms. The risk posed by small arms and light weapons is compounded by its link to terrorism and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking. Thailand therefore attaches great importance to the prevention and suppression of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and is fully committed to the United Nations Programme of Action.

The Thai Government has been able to achieve satisfactory progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action. However, there are States whose progress requires technical and/or international financial assistance. The international community should provide assistance to those countries, in order to enable them to achieve the Programme's objectives.

More than half a million people in Thailand are exposed to the risk of landmines. As a party to the landmine Convention, Thailand is doing its utmost to fulfil our commitments under the Convention, despite our limited resources. As an affected country, we can speak with authority about the humanitarian impact of landmines and the high cost of mine clearance. Thailand therefore emphasizes the importance of international assistance to mine-affected countries with limited capacity, so that they may overcome the serious threat of landmines and enable their people to live free from fear. What is important is to provide not only assistance in stockpile destruction and mine clearance, but also humanitarian assistance to mine victims and their families.

Terrorism is spreading, and terrorists are active in many parts of the world. Delay in negotiations on the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation risks having weapons of mass destruction fall into the hands of terrorists. By completely eliminating weapons of mass destruction, we can ensure that they are not delivered into the hands of terrorists.

At a time when the state of global disarmament negotiations looks less than optimistic, we must not let our resolve be weakened. Instead, we must seek to break the impasse by working collectively and constructively to address the issue. Thailand remains committed to the United Nations as the multilateral negotiating mechanism on disarmament. We hope that in the coming weeks, through our collective efforts, ingenuity and political will, progress will be made. In that regard, I assure you, Madam Chairperson, of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident, Madam Chairperson, that your able leadership and rich and vast experience will contribute to the anticipated success and guide us in dealing with the vital aspects of our disarmament efforts.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Nigeria and Lesotho on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), respectively.

Achieving full disarmament in conventional and non-conventional weapons remains the cornerstone of the international peace and security efforts spearheaded by the United Nations. The failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to come up with a final document, the lack of agreement to include multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation on the World Summit agenda, and the failure to reach consensus at the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects are unfortunate and do not augur well for disarmament initiatives. My delegation is deeply concerned by those disappointing outcomes and the resulting stalemate.

When we agreed in 2000 on the 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), there were promising prospects for their successful implementation. But so far there is no evidence of commitment from Member States to support that initial optimism. Nevertheless, we still believe that the future of the NPT rests on the implementation of the 13 practical steps as a useful way to move forward.

Tanzania is fully committed to supporting the entire NPT regime. In recent years, it has ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba, which established the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. It has also ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and signed an additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in conformity with the CTBT. Tanzania's Parliament has also passed legislation ratifying the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

We urge nuclear-weapon States to change the basis of their defence doctrines from the

confrontational legacy of the cold war to that of the new global collective security. We see no merit in trying to upgrade existing nuclear weapons and increase the precision of their delivery systems. We are equally opposed to any new attempts by States to acquire nuclear weapons. In the same vein, we condemn any illegal transfer of nuclear technology to individuals and non-State actors, a nightmare scenario that may enable terrorists to have those weapons of mass destruction. The transfer of such weapons would further complicate the negotiations on and the implementation and verification of the NPT regime. The NPT enjoys universal adherence among Member States. We call upon those countries that have not adhered to it to do so with a view to ensuring that the rest of us are collectively safe under the NPT umbrella.

Non-nuclear-weapon States have voiced their concern and called for assurances from the five declared nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. Such assurances are vital to remove the temptation for new States to pursue the nuclear option, and their excuse for doing so as a deterrent or defence against nuclear threats or even attacks. The assurances should be viewed as a temporary measure pending the complete eradication of nuclear weapons. We once again call upon nuclear-weapon States to honour their obligations and conclude a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances, as the signing of protocols to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones is not adequate and is in no way legally binding.

Tanzania takes note of the nuclear testing moratorium maintained by the nuclear-weapon States. Nevertheless, self-imposed or unilateral moratoriums provide no guarantee against future testing. My delegation therefore believes that the only guarantee is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. That was one of the objectives of the 1995 Review Conference. It is regrettable that the CTBT has not entered into force, for lack of ratification by 10 of the required 44 nuclear-capable States.

We consider the CTBT to be a vital component of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that it stands to play a key role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its early entry into force is therefore crucial, and we should strive to make that happen. In that context, we call upon all States that have not done so to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible, particularly those States whose ratification is a prerequisite for the Treaty to enter into force.

We wish to emphasize the importance of the three pillars of the NPT: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Those pillars should be treated equally; any attempt to de-link them or deal with them selectively will have a damaging impact on the Treaty.

In that connection, we underscore the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the verification and safeguarding of nuclear programmes to ensure that they are used for peaceful purposes and not for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. It is incumbent upon all States to give the IAEA unimpeded access to national nuclear programmes. We should offer it the necessary support to enable it to perform better. That includes all States parties signing the additional protocol, as called for under article III. The goal should be the universalization of the additional protocol, as proposed by the 2000 Review Conference.

As part of our efforts to seek freedom from fear, as articulated and advocated by the Secretary-General, Tanzania also reminds the international community that small arms and light weapons are not only the weapons of choice in most conventional conflicts today, but in some part of the world, especially in developing countries and Africa, constitute real weapons of mass killing. Tanzania reiterates its call upon the international community to continue working, through the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, for a legal regime to guide the import, export and transfer of small arms and light weapons at both the regional and international levels.

Mr. Al-Istanboli (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Madam, on behalf of my delegation, upon your election to the Chair of this important Committee. We are fully confident that your efforts will permit us to achieve concrete results, and my country is ready to cooperate with you towards achieving that success. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his important briefing and his efforts to enhance international cooperation in order to halt the arms race and promote effective mechanisms for disarmament.

Much hope has been expressed for the success of the Committee's work, and it will not be impossible to realize that hope if all delegations demonstrate the

necessary flexibility and political will so that we may emerge from the present impasse, which is retarding our advance. That impasse is due to a number of States remaining outside the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet been implemented, and there is a stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

My delegation supports all the noble efforts aimed at eliminating all weapons of mass destruction. My country has adhered to the relevant international conventions and treaties, in particular the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the NPT and the CTBT.

Last May, my Government ratified the comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as part of the NPT. My delegation encourages all States that have not yet adhered to the NPT to do so as quickly as possible. At the same time, we emphasize the legitimate right of all States to the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty and in compliance with the international norms and controls as authorized by the IAEA.

Serious and repeated international calls for the destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, have not produced any positive development worth mentioning. The reasons for the delay in fulfilling those demands include the lack of transparency and the use of double standards by influential States when addressing this issue.

When considering in particular nuclear disarmament, it is important to take a balanced position between nuclear disarmament and control of such weapons. The international community is called upon to address all issues concerning disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the IAEA plan of action. In addition, the NPT requires serious, comprehensive review, because it has not kept up with the times.

There is an increasing need to limit the supply of small arms and light weapons to Governments or parties authorized by Governments; legal restrictions should also be imposed on the trade in and possession of small arms and light weapons.

With regard to Iran and the nuclear issue, no country in the region or outside it can hide its concern regarding the existence of a nuclear programme, whatever its use may be. In addition, we could not be fully certain that there would be no damage to mankind or the environment resulting from the use of such technology. There are many lessons to be drawn from that issue. The Chernobyl reactor disaster, which has killed tens of thousands of people and caused enormous destruction to the environment in many ways, is a case in point.

Thus, the Sultanate of Oman has called for making the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. The establishment of such a zone will lead to a positive environment of cooperation between the countries of the region and help to control the arms race there. In that regard, the Sultanate of Oman calls upon all parties to the talks to keep the negotiations open. Direct dialogue is the only means to bring about the necessary solutions to that nuclear issue.

With regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, all parties are called upon to return to the Six-Party Talks as quickly as possible, in order to settle all the issues peacefully.

The establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East requires the support of the international community, as it will have a positive impact on the stability and security of the region and on international peace and security. My delegation supports the proposal to establish such a zone, and expresses its concern about insecurity in the Middle East due to Israel's non-adherence to the NPT. We call upon Israel to immediately adhere to the NPT and submit all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA.

In order to improve the efficiency of the Committee's working methods, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of multilateralism in addressing disarmament matters. Oman supports the promotion of multilateral mechanisms for disarmament as well as confidence-building measures as the only way to bring about complete and total disarmament.

My delegation hopes that the deliberations of the Committee and its resolutions will fulfil the expectations of all peoples for peace, stability and sustainable development.

Mr. Patil (India): Please accept my delegation's warm felicitations on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee, Madam. We are most happy to see in this position an illustrious representative of Norway, a country that has distinguished itself in the advocacy of peace and disarmament. You have our full cooperation and support.

The United Nations can play a central role in making a reality of the general and complete disarmament for which the international community yearns. The First Committee, tasked to deal with disarmament and related international security questions, is the instrument for achieving this, as it provides a universal forum for Member States to assess the current global security environment, identify threats to international peace and security and recommend concrete measures to combat them.

The threats we face today are global in character and therefore need global solutions. No State possesses the capability to confront them by itself. The imperative of cooperation has never been more evident. However, collective security, which inspired the founders of the United Nations, remains only an idea, with security of States being largely predicated on national capabilities. This imperils and weakens the international security system.

It is the lack of a shared perspective that has stalled the Conference on Disarmament and prevented consensus on the disarmament and non-proliferation segment of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Conference on Disarmament has failed to reach agreement on its programme of work. Procedural fixes and debates have failed to bridge these differences. India remains committed, as always, to supporting initiatives that foster a consensus based on the priorities and concerns of all States, to break the deadlock in the Conference.

An important component of international security is energy security. As the global economy expands, spurred by high growth rates in emerging economies, the global demand for energy will dramatically increase. Given the imperatives of sustainable development and the risks from climate change, nuclear energy offers us an environment-friendly source for meeting the global demand. We believe there is an immense opportunity for international cooperation combining with indigenous national efforts to ensure a diversified energy mix for sustainable development.

Another looming danger is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and global terrorism. The growing possibility of terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction has added a new and dangerous dimension to the threat presented by such weapons. The existence of networks of proliferators, aided and abetted by elements within State structures, has further aggravated this threat.

It is therefore of paramount importance that States renew their commitment to fulfil their responsibility to fully abide by the non-proliferation and disarmament obligations that they have assumed voluntarily under various legal instruments, and that they take seriously the requisite measures to deny non-State actors, including terrorists, access to weapons of mass destruction and related equipment, materials and technologies.

India's own impeccable record on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been recognized and appreciated by the international community. Our Parliament's enactment in June 2005 of comprehensive legislation on the prevention of unlawful activities related to such weapons strengthened the existing legal framework for that purpose. We have also updated our export control regulations and lists to reflect the best export control international practices. We shall continue to ensure that India will never be a source of proliferation.

However, we must not lose sight of the goal of nuclear disarmament, which should remain the international community's highest priority. Progress towards nuclear disarmament has unfortunately stalled, and the global disarmament machinery remains paralysed, leading to disquiet among the international community. Non-proliferation and disarmament ought to be mutually reinforcing. This is a challenge for the General Assembly to take up.

The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, resolution 1(I) of 1946, sought the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We can commemorate this glorious vision on its sixtieth anniversary by renewing our commitment to general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. Member States unanimously embraced this objective in 1978, at the first special

session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In our view, another special session might provide much needed impetus to the consensus achieved in 1978 and help bring about forward-looking approaches which take into account the concerns and priorities of all Member States.

The principles of restraint and responsibility are the sheet anchor of India's nuclear doctrine. While maintaining a credible minimum deterrent, India has made no dilution of its commitment to nuclear disarmament, which remains a core objective of its foreign policy, because India believes that its security, as indeed that of the entire world, would be enhanced in a nuclear-weapons-free world. India's nuclear doctrine, espousing no-first use per se and the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is itself a minimalist doctrine reflecting our civilizational abhorrence of violence and destruction.

India has thus continued to observe a voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive tests. India is ready to join negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. On this basis, India joined the consensus on the 1993 resolution on this subject, resolution 48/75 L.

It may be recalled that at the 1988 session of the General Assembly our late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi presented an action plan for nuclear disarmament within a specific time frame. To reaffirm India's abiding commitment to the goal of global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, and to outline concrete steps towards a nuclear-weapons-free world, we present a working paper, distributed with my statement, which seeks to reaffirm the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear-weapon States to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons; reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines; reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, by the de-alerting of nuclear weapons to prevent their unintentional and accidental use; negotiate a global agreement among nuclear-weapon States on "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons; negotiate a universal and legally binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; negotiate a convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and negotiate a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons, and on their time-bound destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons.

The steps mentioned in the paper are not exhaustive, nor do they exclude other measures for achieving the same goal. They are not listed in order of priority, nor do they have any implementation-specific sequencing. We hope that our paper will spur dialogue among States on both the need for nuclear disarmament and the means to achieve it.

Abiding by your appeal to keep statements short, Madam Chairman, we propose to utilize the thematic debate to outline our approaches to the issues related to biological weapons and to small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons. For now, we wish only to underline the importance we attach to the success of the review conferences of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held later this year.

Meanwhile, I hope that the deliberations in the First Committee will meet our expectations and enhance international peace and security.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): First, I congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of our Committee. Your lengthy and broad experience guarantees that under your skilful and capable leadership our work will be crowned with success. You can rest assured of the full support of the delegation of Cameroon in carrying out your lofty mission.

The lack of significant progress in the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process continues to cause Cameroon concern. The Conference on Disarmament has made some strides in 2006 by organizing procedural debates on all the items on its agenda. However, there is an urgent need for it to begin its substantive work in 2007.

My country will continue to strive for a world free of nuclear weapons, whose existence is in itself a serious threat to international peace and security. This threat is further increased by the attempts of terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The complete elimination of all nuclear arsenals is, in my country's opinion, our only guarantee in the field of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation must be tackled together. There is also an urgent need to fully implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prevent weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

The international community must therefore step up its non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts, above all by working for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); for the swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); and for the conclusion of an instrument banning the production of fissile material for military purposes.

With respect to the Iranian nuclear issue and that of the Korean peninsula, my country remains convinced of the need to resolve these questions by diplomatic means. We call upon all the parties concerned to begin constructive negotiations to that end.

Chemical, bacteriological and toxin weapons are also a matter of grave concern for my country. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the legal instruments banning such weapons so that the instruments can become universal. With regard to chemical weapons in particular, while my delegation welcomes the progress made since the entry into force of the Convention, it underscores the ongoing danger posed by stocks of chemical weapons to both the environment and people. We therefore call on those countries that possess such weapons to destroy their stockpiles as soon as possible.

Cameroon was deeply disappointed by the failure of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 26 June to 6 July. Nonetheless, my country strongly reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action. We welcome the fact that it continues to enjoy broad support within the international community, as demonstrated at the Conference.

The Darfur crisis is another source of grave concern for my country. Cameroon urges the parties concerned to settle, through dialogue, modalities for the deployment of the peacekeeping operation in Darfur, and calls for substantial support for the African Union mission, which, as is well known, is confronting considerable difficulties in terms of finances, logisti and troop levels.

Ministers taking part in the 24th Ministeri Meeting of the United Nations Standing Adviso Committee on Security Questions in Central Afric held in Kigali from 25 to 29 September, discussed t threat that the continuing deterioration of the situati in Darfur implies for the security and stability of t countries of Central Africa. They decided to organiz in 2007, a subregional conference on responses cross-border security problems, to make it possible mobilize the international community on the basis concrete border-security projects.

My country reaffirms its full support for t activities of the Standing Advisory Committee, whi since its establishment has played a major role confidence building and promoting disarmament Central Africa, as well as in the quest for tangib solutions to the many problems of peace and securi faced by the countries of the region. The year adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on t Committee's activities reflects the support that enjoys among all Member States. My delegation thank the Secretary-General and the Department f Disarmament Affairs, which acts as the secretariat the Committee, for their support, and encourages the to continue it. We urgently appeal to all Member Stat to contribute to the special fund to finance t Committee's extra-budgetary activities. If it is to ful its important mission, the Committee will requi continued support, particularly in the form of voluntar contributions.

My delegation also appeals for support for t United Nations Regional Centre for Peace a Disarmament in Africa, which is currently confronti serious financial difficulties, particularly regardi implementation of its operational activities. It is cruci that the Centre be able to carry out its importa missions and respond to Africa's peace a disarmament needs.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): I join previou speakers in congratulating you, Madam, on yo assumption of the chairmanship of the Fir Committee. My delegation is confident that under yo able leadership the Committee will have a productiv and successful session.

Every year Armenia takes the opportunity inform the Committee about its advances in the field

disarmament and non-proliferation and to present its position on several topical issues relating to international security. We also use this opportunity to speak about our security challenges, drawing attention in particular to regional developments in the South Caucasus.

I would like first to speak about the former issue. The adoption five years ago of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was an important milestone. It reflected the shared understanding of our common responsibility to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which had become an agent fuelling many conflicts throughout the world, causing grave human suffering and threatening security and stability in many regions.

Armenia welcomed the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held this summer in New York. Like many others, my country had great expectations of the Review Conference, and was deeply disappointed by the lack of consensus to produce an outcome document. Armenia is committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action, and hopes that the spirit of cooperation and readiness to fight this scourge will prevail and bring new results.

My country has consistently declared its commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, to nuclear disarmament and to non-proliferation. In this context, I am pleased to inform the Committee that Armenia recently ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and submitted its instrument of ratification to the Secretary-General.

Armenia attaches the utmost importance to conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. Since Armenia is situated in a region where a number of frozen conflicts still exist and there is a lack of regional security agreements to ensure durable peace and stability, international arms control arrangements are crucial for the security of the whole region, and my country in particular. It goes without saying that under such circumstances the unconditional and complete observance of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of stability and peace in the South Caucasus.

In that regard, Armenia draws attention to Azerbaijan's violation of the Treaty. According to information submitted within the frameworks of the United Nations and the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, in 2005 Azerbaijan imported 44 battle tanks and 83 large-calibre artillery systems, thus violating the ceilings established for that country under the Treaty. Over the past two years, Azerbaijan has not declared any arms reductions. According to the annual exchange of military information for 2005, it possessed 217 battle tanks and 260 large-calibre artillery systems. Hence, overall figures for 2006 in those armament categories exceed the established ceilings of 220 for battle tanks and 280 for large-calibre artillery systems.

We are seriously concerned over this gross violation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It is obviously a result of the arms race policy recently unleashed by the Azerbaijani authorities, accompanied by the endless militaristic and aggressive rhetoric often used by its leadership, rhetoric that contains explicit threats of the use of force and attempts at a military solution to the existing conflict. As a result, today we witness an unprecedented growth of Azerbaijan's military budget, which has drastically increased over the past few years. This enormous growth of military expenditures, pumped up by petrodollars, undeniably testifies to the intention of the Azerbaijani authorities to upset the existing military balance and derail the Nagorny Karabakh negotiation process.

These steps by the Azerbaijani authorities are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. They also run counter to various United Nations documents and resolutions related to the reduction of military budgets, regional disarmament, conventional arms control at the regional level and transparency in armaments — issues that are part and parcel of the debate on the disarmament agenda.

There is no doubt that this policy cannot yield any positive results. To the contrary, it will lead to an increased threat to the fragile security and stability of the region, resulting in, inter alia, a stalemate in the efforts to resolve the existing disputes in the South Caucasus. It is not surprising that the European Union Commissioner for External Relations Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, warned Azerbaijan in a recent statement that its plans to drastically step up its military spending might result in further escalation of the situation in our volatile region.

Armenia remains fully committed to its international obligations on arms control and disarmament. We are confident in the viability and efficiency of the relevant United Nations instruments in enhancing trust, building confidence and promoting regional dialogue and cooperation. Full compliance with United Nations resolutions and regional arrangements on arms control and disarmament is one of the most essential and critical factors that can bring us closer to stability, cooperation and durable peace in the South Caucasus.

Mr. Jevremović (Serbia): I congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's readiness to work closely with you, and I offer you our best wishes and full support. I also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Serbia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union, but I would like to make the following additional remarks.

In order to increase confidence among Member States and promote peace and security, we need a cooperative approach to collective security and an international order based on rules. We should highlight the role of international verification and effective multilateralism, and support measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the Security Council as the ultimate arbiter.

It is necessary to improve efforts to consolidate global treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty into force would contribute to putting an end to the development of new nuclear weapons. Negotiating a global treaty to stop the production of fissile material for weapons would eliminate the source of new material and help to prevent a possible arms race. That is necessary because nuclear, biological and chemical weapons are the most inhumane of all weapons, and their impact is far more indiscriminate and long-lasting. There is an urgent need to revive meaningful negotiations, through all available intergovernmental mechanisms, on the three main objectives: reducing the danger of present arsenals, preventing proliferation and outlawing all weapons of mass destruction once and for all.

As for the maintenance of peace and security in South-Eastern Europe, allow me to refer to the joint statement of the President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, and the President of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić, expressing their satisfaction at the promotion of cooperation in the region, particularly condemning all war crimes and highlighting the significance of our common future in united Europe. We also attach great significance to the Agreement on the Prevention of Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction recently signed with the United States.

Serbia has engaged in the following activities to fulfil its international commitments.

Serbia formally acceded in September 2003 to the Ottawa Convention on landmines, which entered into force on 1 March 2004. Since 1992, anti-personnel mines have not been manufactured or stored in the Republic of Serbia, and their transfer is not allowed. The Republic of Serbia demining centre carries out its activities as planned, and cooperates effectively with international donors and experts. We particularly emphasize that, with the assistance of international donors — Canada and Austria in particular — and the support of the Maintenance and Supply Agency of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the millionth mine, out of a total of 1.3 million, was recently destroyed. If that pace is maintained, the Republic of Serbia will have honoured its obligations in this respect before the deadline in 2009. Our plan is to clear all areas contaminated with mines by the end of 2008. The plan can be delayed only in the absence of the external support needed to finance demining.

In addition, the illegal trade in small arms and lights weapons is a serious problem that affects stability in our region. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, with its direct connection to organized crime and terrorism, is a real threat to peace and security. That is particularly in evidence in Serbia's autonomous province of Kosovo, currently under United Nations interim administration, where large-scale illegal trade in and smuggling of small arms and light weapons flourish. If we want to resolve this problem, we need to ensure full implementation of the Programme of Action on the matter, particularly by strengthening export controls and regional and international cooperation.

Serbia is committed to working against the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms

and light weapons. In 2004, with the assistance and financial support of the United Nations Development Programme, Serbia destroyed a total of 35,000 weapons and 42,000 pieces of ammunition, the best record in South-Eastern Europe.

Great attention has been devoted to outreach programmes to raise public awareness of problems related to the trade in small arms and light weapons, and the dangers posed by their illegal possession. My country is deeply disappointed that the Review Conference of the Programme of Action was unable to agree on an outcome document. It is therefore necessary to renew efforts nationally, regionally and globally.

As party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Serbia supports efforts to achieve its full implementation, and reiterates its firm belief that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy — constitute an important foundation of the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, the 2005 Review Conference achieved no substantive results. This demonstrates the weaknesses in the non-proliferation regime, and we must therefore improve our efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as an important item on the agenda of the international community. Hence, Serbia looks forward to the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the next NPT Review Conference in 2007. Early agreement on unresolved issues will create new optimism.

We attach great importance to the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with which we signed the framework agreement on technical cooperation in 2003. The strengthened safeguards system adopted by the IAEA through the additional protocol should become standard for parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this regard, we highly value the efforts of the IAEA in preventing the diversion of nuclear material from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

As a non-nuclear State, my country supports all regional and multilateral meetings that stress the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and accelerate the ratification process. Therefore, we support development and operation of the verification regime, including the International Monitoring System and the Nuclear Data Centre and its secretariat, so that the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization is ready to monitor and verify compliance with the Treaty once it enters into force. We support the final text of the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT adopted a few weeks ago.

It is regrettable that this year the Conference on Disarmament remained deadlocked over its programme of work. However, thanks to the initiative of the six Presidents, the Conference on Disarmament now seems to be back on the right track. We hope that such initiatives can facilitate the adoption of a substantive programme of work. The current and incoming Presidents should cooperate closely so that the Conference on Disarmament can finally start negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as soon as the beginning of next year's session.

Biological weapons are a subject of serious concern for my country. Serbia fully honours the provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). In cooperation with some European Union States, it seeks to respond as effectively as possible to all challenges that may emerge in the wake of their use. To that end, many concrete activities have been undertaken in order to strengthen measures for the prevention, suppression and elimination of dangers from biological agents and toxic materials that may be used for bio-terrorism purposes. The States parties to the Convention should launch a campaign to achieve universal adherence and promote best-practice models of such legislation. Serbia appeals to all Member States to try to find common ground during the Review Conference, which will take place in Geneva this autumn.

My country also supports universal and strict implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In this context, of particular importance is cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague, and the fulfilment of my country's obligations under articles V and VI. In addressing these problems, Serbia has organized several international courses on protection from chemical weapons. Therefore, Serbia calls on all countries that possess such weapons to do everything in their power to destroy all their stocks of

chemical weapons within the time frame envisaged in the Convention.

In conclusion, I stress that Serbia strongly supports effective control of the international trade in conventional weapons, in accordance with criteria that apply globally. This is a vital first step towards establishing an arms trade treaty. One of the main objectives of such a treaty must be to prevent conventional weapons from being diverted to illicit purposes, such as organized crime and terrorism, without prejudice to the right of States to produce, acquire and maintain such weapons for self-defence purposes, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

I conclude by expressing the hope that during the current session we shall produce strong and effective resolutions that will enable the international community to address in a practical way the current and emerging threats to international peace and security.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the Kyrgyz delegation, Madam, I congratulate you on your election and wish you every success in your work. We are certain that under your skilful guidance we shall be able to carry out our tasks.

We would like to emphasize the important role the First Committee plays in working out general views on, and approaches to, the key issues of disarmament and international security. On the basis of mutual dialogue, we shall be able to reach a better understanding of the problems and priorities of security, and to broaden our general positions.

One of the basic concerns is to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The operation of the Treaty should be based on its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right of all States parties to conduct research in the area of nuclear energy and to produce and use it for peaceful purposes. States should continue efforts to obtain the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by acceding to and ratifying the Treaty. We regard the CTBT as one of the key instruments in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and as an instrument for strategic stability and security.

Supporting the efforts of the international community, on 8 September this year five Central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — signed in Semipalatinsk an agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The signing of that treaty is proof of our commitment to the principle of non-proliferation and of our efforts to make a collective contribution to strengthening international security. We emphasize that the treaty calls for environmental rehabilitation of areas damaged as a result of activities forming part of the nuclear arms race, in particular areas used to store spent uranium fuel stocks. The Kyrgyz Republic, which is a depositary of the Central Asian treaty, expresses the gratitude to Member States and to international and non-governmental organizations that have welcomed the signing of that historic document.

I would now like to deal briefly with a number of other issues on the Committee's agenda. The international instruments on weapons of mass destruction, particularly chemical, bacteriological and toxin weapons, should become universal so as to ensure their effectiveness in maintaining international security. We believe that the coming Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention could lead to a breakthrough in efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. We welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1540 (2004) on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the technologies and materials associated with them. We are actively working to strengthen export controls other mechanisms required for implementation of the resolution.

Kyrgyzstan is also taking appropriate measures at the national level to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We support an active role on the part of the United Nations in solving this problem.

In conclusion, we express our hope that during the current session the Committee will be able to meet more effectively the new challenges that the international community faces in the sphere of disarmament and international security.

The Chairperson: The representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I remind all delegations that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a

given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in the exercise of right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to ten minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes.

Mr. Ismayil-Zada (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you, Madam, on your appointment to your elevated post.

The bold statement by the representative of Armenia about my country has caused me to ask to speak in exercise of my right of reply.

I would first like to dwell upon a number of figures that relate to armed forces in Armenia itself, where 316 battle tanks, 322 artillery systems and 5,000 members of the Armenian armed forces exceed the standards set. This was stated in the report of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The figures go beyond all the standards relating to that country within the framework of the treaties in relation to the number of inhabitants.

I would also like to point out the anti-personnel mines placed in the region by Armenian separatists in the so-called period of war to free Nagorny Karabakh. Many people of Azerbaijani nationality have suffered as a result in the areas bordering on this region. Therefore, the Republic of Armenia does not respect its obligations under international law. It does not respect resolutions of the Security Council and is an obstacle to peaceful development in our region.

Organization of work

The Chairperson: Before adjourning the meeting, I propose that we revert to the question of the indicative timetable for the second phase of the Committee's work.

A new revised document, A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.2, has been distributed to all delegations this morning, because the list of guest speakers for the afternoon meeting on Monday 9 October has now been finalized.

As members can see, we will have the pleasure of having the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament join us.

We also have to amend the references to the meetings on Tuesday 17 October and Wednesday 18 October, with the insertion of "informal" to faithfully reflect the practice followed last year; the meetings on those two days will be informal.

It is my intention to divide the formal meetings into three segments, so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive discussions, as well as having all the draft resolutions introduced in an efficient and timely manner.

The first segment will start with a guest speaker for some meetings, as indicated in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev/2. After the speaker has made his or her opening statement, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so that we may have an informal question and answer session with the guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second segment, which will consist of interventions by delegations on the specific subject under consideration. The third segment, which is also formal, will allow time for the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions.

May I take it that the proposed indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, contained in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.2, as orally revised with the insertion of the word, "informal" for Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 October, is acceptable to all delegations?

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me thank you, Madam, for distributing the revised conference room paper. Certainly we can go along with the changes you have just mentioned.

I take the floor to explain yesterday's position of this delegation.

We found in the official records that at last year's organizational meeting the Chair made the following statement:

> "during the second phase ... I plan to allocate two meetings for an exchange with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and other United Nations officials and for the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session, including the presentation of reports. Like last year, those events will take place in an informal mode." (*A/C.1/60/PV.1, p. 3*)

I believe that with the changes you have proposed, Madam Chairman, we follow last year's pattern, and my delegation agrees with this proposal.

The Chairperson: That observation is correct.

May I take it that the proposed indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, contained in document A/C.1/61/CRP.2/Rev.2, as orally revised with the insertion of the word "informal" for Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 October, is acceptable to all delegations?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.